

Texas Democratic Party Handbook



2006

Texas Democratic Party
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Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to explain the operations of the Texas Democratic Party and describe activities required to build an army of activists. It incorporates the latest *Rules of the Democratic Party*, the latest *Texas Election Code*, and the 2006-07 rules and regulations of the Texas Ethics Commission.

This handbook is a guide. It must not be used in place of the official *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party*, the *Texas Election Code*, or the rules of the Texas Ethics Commission.

Should any issue arise, consult the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules)*, *Texas Election Code* or the rules and regulations of the Texas Ethics Commission.

Personal Responsibility

Whether you are a campaign volunteer or hold a position of authority in the Democratic Party, you have been entrusted with the responsibility of serving your fellow Democrats. Always act accordingly.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

(The) Base or Base Voters Voters that consistently vote for Democratic candidates. Also refers to precincts with a Democratic Performance Index (DPI) of 65% and above. Areas always targeted by Democratic organizations for Get Out The Vote (GOTV) efforts.

Block Captain A volunteer willing to assist the precinct chair. A block captain is typically responsible for one “block” in a precinct.

Block Captain Program A program consisting of one person per street, group of streets, city block, or group of blocks to assist the precinct chair in the coordination of Democratic campaign activities at the precinct level.

Blue Dog Democrat A Democrat who votes more “conservatively” than a Yellow Dog Democrat.

Conventions (Precinct, County, Senatorial District, State) System to elect delegates, select resolutions, and make platforms.

Convention Committees:

Credentials (County, Senatorial, and State) Establishes the permanent roll of the convention and makes recommendations to the convention to resolve challenges to delegate credentials.

Nominations (County and Senatorial) Recommends delegates to fill and balance the state convention delegation. (State) Nominates State Democratic Executive Committee officers; SDEC members, as recommended by senatorial district caucuses; and, in presidential years, DNC representatives. In presidential years, the duties of the Nominations Committee for At-Large Delegates to the National Convention and the Nominations Committee for Presidential Electors shall be those implied by their titles or as assigned by the National Party Rules.

Platform (County and Senatorial) Typically combined with the resolution committee to screen and forward platform recommendations. (State) Writes and recommends to the convention a Party platform for the November General election.

Resolutions (County and Senatorial) Reviews and combines similar resolutions. Each resolution is then sent to convention with a “for” or “against” recommendation.

(State) Considers resolutions submitted to the Convention, other than those within the proper jurisdiction of the Platform Committee; makes recommendations to the Convention.

Rules Committee (County, Senatorial, and State) (1) Ensures the *Texas Statute Election Code* and the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules)* are followed and (2) Considers questions about rules.

(State) (1) Considers and recommends to the Convention proposed amendments to the permanent *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party* and (2) then *makes the new rules available online at www.txdemocrats.org*. The *Texas Statute Election Code* is available at www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/eltoc.htm.

County Chair Elected by the primary voters of a county to preside over the County Executive Committee (CEC). The county chair and CEC oversee the Democratic Party in that county.

CEC or County Executive Committee A body composed of the county chair and all of the precinct chairs of a county. The CEC oversees the County Democratic Party’s activities.

Cycle Term generally refers to the period between one General election and the next.

DNC or Democratic National Committee Governing body of the national Democratic Party.

Down Ballot Candidate positions on a ballot listed below the highest office running.

DPI or Democratic Performance Index Average Democratic performance in a precinct or a given area based on recent elections. The DPI is calculated by averaging the percentage of votes that selected Democratic candidates received.

DRT or Data Retrieval Team Group that collects voting information from polling sites on Election Day and reports back to the Party and area coordinators. The turnout information is used to guide GOTV efforts.

E-Day Election day.

EV or Early Voting Texas allows voters to vote at selected voting locations prior to Election Day. Times vary but the days are set by statute, beginning the 17th day before an election and ending on the 4th day before the election. The term technically includes mail-in balloting (VBM=vote by mail) but is normally used to refer to early in-person voting. Votes cast in early voting are not counted until polls close on Election Day.

Election Judge A non-partisan administrative authority at a polling site.

General Election The election in November of even-numbered years that determines who will hold state and county offices. This is a partisan election.

GPAC or General-Purpose Political Committee A Texas political committee that, supports/opposes more than one candidate or candidates voted on in more than one county (e.g., statewide candidates), but is not a committee of an identified candidate. If a County Party Executive Committee spends more than \$25,000 in a calendar year, it must form a type of GPAC by appointing a campaign treasurer within 15 days, and file reports of contributions and expenditures with the Texas Ethics Commission. County parties usually file on a special set of forms. Any other group that raises or spends \$500 must appoint a campaign treasurer and start filing reports.

GOTV or Get Out The Vote A program or program component to motivate and turn out **OUR** voters.

Household List A list of registered voters grouped by address; used for phone banking and block walking purposes.

Independent (voter) A voter who votes in general elections but not in party primaries. A person not associated with a major political party.

Marginal (vote/voters) See swing voters.

Platform A declaration of principles and policies adopted by a political party or candidate.

Precinct Chair Party official directly elected by the primary voters in a voter precinct. Serves on the County Executive Committee, chairs the precinct convention, and is responsible for coordinating all campaign activity in a precinct. This is a partisan position vs. an Election Judge, which is a non-partisan position in the General election.

Primary Election Election held in March of even-numbered years to determine which of a party's candidates will be the party's nominee in the November General election.

Robert's Rules of Order Book of rules governing parliamentary procedure in all Party conventions, caucuses, and convention committees, except where contrary rules or procedures are specified by the *Rules of the Democratic Party*.

Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules) Official rules of the Texas Democratic Party. The Party rules can be found at the Party's website, which is www.txdemocrats.org.

Runoff Election Election to determine a party's nominee when no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote in an election. Only the two top vote-getters are on the ballot in a runoff election. There is no run-off in the General Election.

SDEC or State Democratic Executive Committee The SDEC governs the party between conventions. Body composed of the State Party Chair, Vice Chair, and other officers elected at the State Convention; two members elected by the delegates at the State Convention from each senatorial district; and representatives of several Democratic organizations.

Steering Committee A body representing all Democratic organizations, interests, and candidates in a given area for the purpose of coordinating activities.

Super Saturday (or Sunday) Weekend (and in some cases weekends) scheduled during Early Vote.

Usually produces the highest turnout outside of Election Day.

Swing Voters Voters with an unpredictable history of voting for Democratic candidates. Precincts with a DPI between 45% and 65%. Areas usually targeted by candidates for voter persuasion.

Targeting Process of determining which demographic groups and precincts that have voters who are more likely to support a favored candidate or party.

TDP or Texas Democratic Party Address is 707 Rio Grande, Austin, TX. Phone is 512-478-9800.

Website is www.txdemocrats.org

TDP Rules Rules of the Texas Democratic Party

Texas Election Code The official election code of the state of Texas. The Election Code can be found at www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/eltoc.htm.

VBM or Vote By Mail A means of voting via the postal system that is available to elderly voters, voters with physical disabilities, people who will not be home for the election, and military personnel.

Voter File The Texas Democratic Party owns and maintains a database of all registered voters in Texas that is available on-line to precinct chairs, counties, and candidates.

Walking List A list of registered voters grouped by street and address; typically used for block walking purposes.

Yellow Dog Democrat A hard-core Democrat; a person who would vote for a yellow dog before voting for anybody that is not a Democrat.

The Texas Democratic Party Handbook

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Chapter 1 Democratic Party Overview and History

The Democratic Party (the Party) is a layered coalition of organizations. Each level can be called and is in fact the Democratic Party. Each level solicits funding and support:

National – The Democratic National Committee (DNC)

State – The Texas Democratic Party (TDP)

County – County Democratic Parties

The Democratic National Committee (DNC)

The Democratic National Committee, the oldest continuously functioning party committee in the world, was established by the National Convention in 1848. It has the following responsibilities:

- Plan the presidential nominating convention of the Party
- Promote the election of the candidates of the Party with both technical and financial support
- Work with national, state, and local party organizations, elected officials, and candidates

Anyone who declares him or herself a Democrat is considered a member of the DNC. The DNC has its headquarters and staff in Washington, DC, and convenes to elect its officers early in the year following the presidential election. The DNC officers, including the DNC Chair, who is referred to as the Party Chair, are elected by the 440-plus national committee members.

The national committee is composed of members selected by the following Democratic organizations:

- The Democratic organization in each state plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands)
- Democrats living outside the United States (Democrats Abroad)
- Representatives of various Democratic constituencies and elected officials

There are several functional caucuses and committees within the DNC. Detailed information about the structure and organization of national party is available at the DNC website, www.democrats.org.

A Brief History of the Democratic Party

At the start of the 21st Century, the Democratic Party can look back on a proud history — a history not just of a political organization but of a national vision. More than two hundred years ago, our Party's founders decided that wealth and social status were not an entitlement to rule. They believed that wisdom and compassion could be found within every individual and a stable government must be built upon a broad popular base.

Thomas Jefferson founded the Democratic Party in 1792 as a congressional caucus to fight for the Bill of Rights and against the elitist Federalist Party. In 1798, the "party of the common man" was officially named the Democratic-Republican Party. Jefferson was elected the first Democratic President of the United States in 1800. He served two distinguished terms and was followed by James Madison in 1808. Madison strengthened America's armed forces — helping reaffirm American independence by defeating the British in the War of 1812. James Monroe was elected president in 1816 and led the nation through a time commonly known as "The Era of Good Feeling" in which Democratic-Republicans served with little opposition.

The election of John Quincy Adams in 1824 was highly contested and led to a four-way split among Democratic-Republicans. A result of the split was the emergence of Andrew Jackson as a national leader. This war hero organized his supporters to a degree unprecedented in American history. The Jacksonian Democrats created the national convention process, the party platform, and reunified the Democratic

Party with Jackson's victories in 1828 and 1832. The Party held its first National Convention in 1832 and nominated President Jackson for his second term. In 1844, the National Convention simplified the Party's name to The Democratic Party.

In 1848, the National Convention established the Democratic National Committee, now the longest running political organization in the world. The Convention charged the DNC with the responsibility of promoting "the Democratic cause" between the conventions and preparing for the next convention.

As the 19th Century came to a close, the American electorate changed more and more rapidly. The Democratic Party embraced the immigrants who flooded into cities and industrial centers, built a political base by bringing them into the American mainstream, and helped create the most powerful economic engine in history. Democratic Party leader William Jennings Bryan led a movement of agrarian reformers and supported women's suffrage, the progressive graduated income tax, and the direct election of Senators. As America entered the 20th Century, the Democratic Party became dominant in local urban politics.

In 1912, Woodrow Wilson became the first Democratic president of the 20th Century. Wilson led the country through World War I, fought for the League of Nations, established the Federal Reserve Board, and passed the first labor and child welfare laws.

A generation later, Franklin Roosevelt was elected president running on the promise of a New Deal. Roosevelt pulled America out of the Depression by energizing citizens around the belief that their government could actively assist them in times of need. Roosevelt's New Deal brought water to California's Central Valley, electrified Appalachia and saved farms across the Midwest. The Civilian Conservation Corps, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Social Security all brought Americans into the system, freeing us from fear, giving us a stake in the future, and making the nation stronger.

With the election of Harry Truman, Democrats began the fight to bring down the final barriers of race and gender. Truman integrated the military and oversaw the reconstruction of Europe by establishing the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Truman's leadership paved the way for civil rights leaders who followed.

In the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy challenged an optimistic nation to build on its great history. Kennedy proclaimed a New Frontier and dared Americans to put a man on the moon, created the Peace Corps, and negotiated a treaty banning atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. Kennedy and Johnson worked together to end the practice of segregation in many southern states. Lyndon Johnson followed Kennedy's lead and worked to pass the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act. Following Kennedy's assassination, Johnson declared a War on Poverty and created Medicare — ensuring that older Americans would receive quality health care.

In 1976, Jimmy Carter was elected president, helping to restore the nation's trust in government following the Watergate scandal. Carter negotiated the historic Camp David Peace Accords between Egypt and Israel.

In 1992, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton was elected the 42nd President of the United States. President Clinton ran on the promise of a New Covenant for America's forgotten working families. After twelve years of Republican presidents, America faced record budget deficits, high unemployment, and increasing crime. President Clinton's policies put people first and resulted in the longest period of economic expansion in peacetime history. The Deficit Reduction Act of 1993 — passed by both the House and Senate without a single Republican vote — put America on the road to fiscal responsibility and led to the end of perennial budget deficits. Having inherited a \$290 billion deficit in 1992, President Clinton's last budget was over \$200 billion in surplus. The Clinton/Gore Administration was responsible for reducing unemployment to its lowest level in decades and reducing crime to its lowest levels in a generation. In 1996, President Clinton became the first Democratic president reelected since Roosevelt.

The late Ron Brown — the former Chairman of the Democratic Party — put it best when he wrote, "The common thread of Democratic history, from Thomas Jefferson to Bill Clinton, has been an abiding faith

in the judgment of hardworking American families, and a commitment to helping the excluded, the disenfranchised and the poor strengthen our nation by earning themselves a piece of the American Dream. We remember that this great land was sculpted by immigrants and slaves, their children and grandchildren.”

History of the Democratic Donkey

When Andrew Jackson ran for president in 1828, his opponents tried to label him a "jackass" for his populist views and his slogan, "Let the people rule." Jackson, however, picked up on their name calling and turned it to his own advantage by using the donkey on his campaign posters. During his presidency, the donkey was used to represent Jackson's stubbornness when he vetoed re-chartering the National Bank. The first time the donkey was used in a political cartoon to represent the Democratic Party it was again in conjunction with Jackson. Although in 1837 Jackson was retired, he still thought of himself as the leader of the Party and was shown trying to get the donkey to go where he wanted it to go. The cartoon was titled "A Modern Baalim and his Ass."

Interestingly enough, the person credited with getting the donkey widely accepted as the Democratic Party's symbol probably had no knowledge of the prior associations. Thomas Nast, a famous political cartoonist, came to the United States with his parents in 1840 when he was six. He first used the donkey in an 1870 Harper's Weekly cartoon to represent the "Copperhead Press" kicking a dead lion, symbolizing Lincoln's Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, who had recently died. Nast intended the donkey to represent an anti-war faction, with whom he disagreed, but the symbol caught the public's fancy and the cartoonist continued using it to indicate some Democratic editors and newspapers.

Later, Nast used the donkey to portray what he called "Caesarism," showing the alleged Democratic uneasiness over a possible third term for Ulysses S. Grant. In conjunction with this issue, Nast helped associate the elephant with the Republican Party. Although the elephant had been connected with the Republican Party in cartoons that appeared in 1860 and 1872, it was Nast's cartoon published in 1874 by Harper's Weekly that made the pachyderm stick as the Republicans' symbol. A cartoon titled "The Third Term Panic" showed animals representing various issues running away from a donkey wearing a lion's skin tagged "Caesarism." The elephant labeled "The Republican Vote" was about to run into a pit containing inflation, chaos, repudiation, etc.

By 1880 the donkey was well established as a mascot for the Democratic Party. A cartoon about the Garfield-Hancock campaign in the New York Daily Graphic showed the Democratic candidate mounted on a donkey, leading a procession of crusaders.

Over the years, the donkey and the elephant have become the accepted symbols of the Democratic and Republican parties. Although the Democrats have never officially adopted the donkey as a party symbol, we have used various donkey designs on publications over the years. The Republicans have actually adopted the elephant as their official symbol and use their design widely.

What has the Democratic Party done for you lately?

The Democratic Party has been so successful in improving our lives, that sometimes people forget what we have accomplished that makes life better.

- The Democratic Party members are the people who brought you a minimum wage and the promise of prevailing local wages, 8-hour workday in a safe environment, unemployment benefits, and workers compensation when things go wrong.
- The Democratic programs of the Federal Home Loan Program, Water Quality Act, and Rural Electrification Act brought ownership of a home with utilities within reach of most of us.
- Democrats awarded veterans G. I. student benefits, home loans, and health care they so richly deserve.

- Democrats created plans, such as Head Start, Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Guaranteed Student Loan Program have helped us raise and educate our children.
- Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Securities and Exchange Act help us enjoy a secure old age.
- Democrats brought many of us our very right to vote in the Women's Suffrage Amendment and Voting Rights Act of 1965.

We must continue to fight groups who are trying to destroy all of these benefits that we take for granted now.

A List of Democratic Accomplishments

- 8-Hour Workday
- Social Security
- Minimum Wage Law
- G.I. Bill of Rights
- Marshall Plan
- NATO
- Peace Corps
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Operation Head Start
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Water Quality Act
- Clean Air Act
- First Man on the Moon
- Women's Suffrage Amendment
- Workers Compensation Act
- Unemployment Compensation Act
- Rural Electrification Act
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
- Federal Home Loan Program
- Securities & Exchange Act
- Guaranteed Student Loan Program
- Family and Medical Leave Act
- School Lunch Program
- Motor Voter Act
- 100,000 New police on U.S. streets
- Balanced budget in 1998 as a result of the Balanced Act 1993
- Davis-Bacon Act

Chapter 2 The Texas Democratic Party

The Texas Democratic Party (the TDP, the State Party, the Party, Party) does the following:

- Plans and conducts the Party's biennial convention
- Promotes the election of the Party candidates
- Works with state and local Party organizations, elected officials, candidates, and various constituencies

Senate Districts

The State of Texas has 31 state Senate Districts. Their size and shape are set by the Texas Legislature. Boundaries of senate districts are independent of the boundaries of the state's 254 counties.

A senate district can consist of a portion of one county, an entire county, several counties, or portions of two or more counties.

By state law and *The Rules of the Texas Democratic Party*, elected representatives from the senate districts make up the majority of the State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC), the governing body of the Party. The members of the SDEC elected from the senate districts constitute the statutory SDEC. The other individuals that have seats and vote at the SDEC meeting are there as a courtesy because of the significant contribution to Democratic victories. The courtesy members may vote on non-statutory issues. The senate district is also used in the delegate/convention process, see details in Chapter 4.

The State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC)

The State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC) is the executive body of the Texas Democratic Party. The TDP, including its executive body, is established by *Texas Election Code* and supported by the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules)*.

The operations of the TDP and SDEC are dictated by the *TDP Rules*, not the rules of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

The TDP has a fulltime headquarters and staff in Austin. The state chair oversees the headquarters' operations and administers policy as set at the state convention and by the SDEC. Additional information is available at www.txdemocrats.org

The current State Democratic Executive Committee consists of the following 98 members:

- 8 TDP officers – The Texas Democratic Party Chair (Party Chair, Chair), Vice-Chair, Vice-Chair for Finance, Treasurer, Secretary, two Co-Parliamentarians, and Sergeant-at-Arms. Delegates at the state convention elect the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The other officers are appointed by the Chair for a two-year term.
- 62 Senate District (SD) members – A man and a woman from each of the 31 senate districts elected to two-year terms by senate district delegates at the state convention. These officers are commonly called SDEC members.
- 16 Caucus and Organization representatives – Members from nine recognized caucuses and organizations are elected to two-year terms by members of their groups at the state convention.
- 12 DNC representatives – Representatives are elected to four-year terms by the state convention delegates at the state convention during presidential election years.

At the present time there are seven functional committees in the party's executive committee; Finance, Grassroots, Legislative, Nominations and Legal, Resolutions, Rules, and Advisory. The State Chair sets the committees and appoints the chair of each committee. Each committee elects a co-chair of the opposite sex.

SDEC Committees

Advisory – The Advisory Committee is a special committee that allows for small Democratic organizations that are not large enough to be “recognized” to have input into the Party.

Finance – The Finance Committee is chaired by Vice Chair for Finance and co-chaired by Party Treasurer. It raises money for the Democratic Party, plans and encourages fundraising efforts, and advises the Chair on budget matters.

Grassroots – The Grassroots Committee works to increase voter registration and voter turnout, works with local party leadership, and plans and produces training sessions and material to increase local grassroots activity around the state.

Legislative – The Legislative Committee recommends positions on legislation of interest to the Party and monitors legislative activity.

Nominations and Legal Affairs – The Nominations and Legal Affairs Committee recommends replacements for vacancies in Party Offices and recommends replacements for positions on the ballot in public offices. Certifies ballot, canvasses returns of primary elections, and monitors conduct of elections.

Resolutions – The Resolutions Committee drafts and considers resolutions of interest to the Party and recommends action on all resolutions referred to the SDEC by the Convention.

Rules – The Rules Committee considers changes to the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party*, which governs the SDEC, County Executive Committees, Delegate Selection, and Conventions.

SDEC Members

SDEC members represent all Democrats in their respective senate districts or organizations and are the direct links between Democrats at the local level and the TDP. Their most important role is to maintain two-way communications with their county chair(s), elected officials, and Democratic organizations in their districts. This allows them to receive and transmit ideas, ideals, and direction between the local level and the SDEC.

Senate district caucuses, at the state convention, elect SDEC members to two-year terms. SDEC members have several official and unofficial responsibilities. By *TDP Rules*, the only reason for removal is the support of an opposition party candidate.

Duties and Responsibilities

Official and unofficial duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- SDEC meetings
- SDEC functional committee and subcommittee meetings
- SDEC workshops and training sessions
- Senate district committee meetings
- County executive committee meetings
- TDP events and activities
- Local Democratic club meetings

It is essential for SDEC members to perform the following duties:

- Understand *Robert's Rules of Order* and the *TDP Rules*
- Pay personal travel expenses to SDEC meetings and other incidental expenses (average SDEC member cost is \$2,000/year)
- Have electronic communication connectivity
- Assist in TDP fundraising [See sample fundraising letter in Appendix G]

- Actively support the TDP platform and Democratic candidates
- Maintain activity records and submit as requested
- Disseminate party information and solicit input
- Act as liaison to county chairs
- Assist in developing TDP materials and messages
- Assist with county/senate district (SD) conventions
- Assist county chairs with administering the Primary Election
- Assist the TDP in developing and organizing the state convention
- Assist local, county, and State Party officials in finding and cultivating candidates
- Maintain a list of all elected officials in the SD and keep the Party abreast of changes
- Attend TDP electronic training as needed
- Never support a candidate of an opposition party
- (Optional but highly desirable) be proficient using electronic communication, database management, and Internet use (training available from Party)

Term of Office and Qualifications

The term of office for SDEC member is two years, beginning at the conclusion of the state convention. To be eligible for the office of SDEC member, an individual must meet these qualifications:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a qualified voter who has voted in the latest Democratic primary (not counting runoffs) in the voting year
- Be a resident of the senate district from which he or she is seeking election
- Not be a candidate for or holder of an elective office of the federal, state, or county government
- (Optional, but highly desirable) have political experience and knowledge of the district
- (Optional, but highly desirable) have Internet and e-mail capabilities and basic computer skills

How to Become a Senate District SDEC Member

The following steps are necessary to become a SDEC Member, representing one of the 31 senate districts:

- Attend your precinct convention on the night of the primary and get elected to the senatorial/county convention as a delegate.
- Attend the senatorial/county convention and get elected as a delegate to the state convention.
- Lobby the delegates and alternates of the senatorial district caucus, letting them know you are running and why you should be elected. (The list of delegates and alternates for a senatorial district caucus may be obtained from the TDP Headquarters.)
- Conduct your campaign until senatorial district meeting or senate district caucus at the state convention when the election will occur.
- Get elected by your fellow senatorial district delegates.

Vacancies for unexpired terms are filled as follows:

- The senate district committee submits its recommendation to the SDEC Nominations Committee.
- The Nominations Committee submits its recommendation, typically that of the senate district committee, to the body of the SDEC for a vote.

Senate District Executive Committee

A Senate District Executive Committee, more commonly called the senate district committee, consists of representatives from each of the counties within a senate district. The senate district committee, which is a committee within the senate district, should not be confused with the State Democratic Executive Committee, which contains two representatives from each of the 31 senate districts.

The representative is the county chair when the entire county is in the senate district. Where only a portion of a county is in a senate district, the precinct chairs of the precincts within the senate district elect a person to be their representative.

The senate district committee has two main functions.

- In the event there is a member vacancy for that senate district on the State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC), that senate district committee is called upon to recommend a person to the SDEC Nomination Committee to fill the unexpired term.
- Should there be a withdrawal of the Democratic nominee for state Senate, the Senate District Executive Committee will choose a replacement.
- Another function is somewhat un-official and something that differs from committee to committee. This function is the negotiation to determine how the different positions that are elected at the state convention will be distributed. This sounds more confusing than it is. See the Chapter 4 for additional information.

Resources Available to the Party

The Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules); the *Texas Election Code*; a comprehensive voter database; and active Democratic clubs and organizations, and organized counties are essential resources.

TDP Rules - A copy of the *Texas Democratic Party Rules* can be obtained at no charge from the State Party Office or online at www.txdemocrats.org.

Texas Election Code - A copy of the *Texas Election Code* can be obtained from the Texas Legislature Online website at www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/eltoc.html. The Election Code outlines the rules for voter registration, campaigning, elections, precinct conventions, etc.

Current information on elections is available from the Secretary of State at the website www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/index.shtml. Questions can be directed via e-mail to elections@sos.state.tx.us or asked via telephone at 1-800-252-VOTE (8683).

Voter Database - The State Party provides an on-line Voter Management System that includes all registered voters, their addresses, phone numbers, and voting histories. This database can be used to identify solid Democrats and swing voters in selected areas.

Information contained in the database is available to SDEC committee members, county chairs, precinct chairs, and candidates by applicable district.

Access to the system is coordinated through the Voter File Director at the State Party Headquarters. To obtain access: go to www.votermanagement.com and fill out an application.

Clubs and Organizations - There are numerous local, regional, and statewide Democratic clubs and organizations in Texas. These groups are typically made up of Party activists, campaign activists, and other active Democrats. They have their own officers and structures and provide support for the Party at all levels. A majority of them are not officially connected to the Party.

The *TDP Rules* prescribe how a statewide organization may gain representation in the State Democratic Executive Committee. Currently, these groups are the Texas Young Democrats, the County Chairs Association, the Texas Democratic Women, the Coalition of Black Democrats, the Non-Urban Caucus, the Tejano Democrats, the Stonewall Democrats, House Democratic Caucus, and the Senate Democratic Caucus.

Chapter 3 The County Democratic Party

The Democratic Party at the county level is the county Democratic Party (County Party, Party). The 254 county Democratic parties, which are headed by county chairs, are the focal points of campaign and Party building activities.

The 254 counties in Texas are further divided into voter precincts, each led by a precinct chair. County Commissioners' Courts, not the Texas Democratic Party, determine precinct boundaries. By virtue of *Texas Election Code* and *Texas Democratic Party Rules (TDP Rules)*, the County Party and its voter precincts are subdivisions of the State Party, although they operate somewhat independently of the Texas Democratic Party (State Party).

The governing body of the county Democratic Party is the County Executive Committee (CEC). The CEC is chaired by the county chair and composed of the county chair and all precinct chairs within the county.

Any resident in the county who supports the statement of principles of the Democratic Party and voted in the most recent Democratic Primary is considered a member of the County Party.

The 254 county parties are represented at the state level by their senate district members of the State Democratic Executive Committee.

Voting Precincts

The voting precinct exists to facilitate elections at the local level. The precinct is the smallest political subdivision in Texas, while the senate districts are the largest. State law sets the maximum number of registered voters in a precinct based on the county's population.

The County Commissioners' Court determines precinct boundaries.

The Precinct Chair

The party leader in the voting precinct is the precinct chair, who is elected by the voters in the precinct in the Democratic Primary. The precinct chair is the most important elected official in the Democratic Party. An active, effective precinct chair makes an enormous difference in the success of the Party and our candidates.

Duties and Responsibilities

The following is a list that includes, but does not limit, the official and unofficial duties and responsibilities of the precinct chair:

- Organize the precinct and get to know the people in the precinct
- Be a standing member of the County Executive Committee
- Represent the precinct by attending every County Executive Committee meeting
- Get our voters to the polls
- Bridge the gap between voters and elected officials
- Help find judges, alternate judges, and election clerks
- Get people to do the following volunteer jobs:
 - Work the precinct polling place on Election Day
 - Pass out literature
 - Report pertinent information back to the Democratic party headquarters and Democratic campaigns

- Dress the polls on Election Day
- Understand the *TDP Rules* and *Texas Election Code*
- Encourage primary voters to attend the precinct convention
- Place sign(s) at the Primary voting locations indicating the location of the precinct convention
- Organize and conduct the precinct convention – see Appendix A

The Democratic vote is maximized when the party is organized at the precinct level

Organizing the Precinct

Know the Precinct: Get a map of the precinct from the county chair, county clerk, or elections administrator. Drive around the precinct and learn its geographical boundaries and characteristics.

Knowing your precinct allows you to plan precinct activities, including canvassing, finding meeting places, deciding where to distribute literature, registering voters, etc.

Canvass the Precinct: Get a list of voters in the precinct from the county chair and/or access voter information for the precinct using the Party's on-line Voter Management System. Use the voter list to verify and update telephone numbers. Use local phone books and/or the Internet.

Then, either in person (best method) or by phone, contact every registered voter that voted in any of the three most recent Democratic Primaries. Identify yourself as the precinct chair. Tell them that you are calling to identify all of the Democrats in the precinct so you can keep them informed of upcoming Democratic activities and events. Here is also your chance to ask them for assistance in further canvassing.

Once all known Democrats have been called, call the remainder of the registered voters in the precinct that did not vote in the most recent Republican primary to find additional Democrats and others that lean our way. The voter list may be divided among the previously contacted Democrats. Pass updated and corrected phone numbers and/or information to the county chair. Sample scripts are located in Appendix G.

Mailing is not truly considered canvassing, but is an alternative method of contacting registered voters.

Canvassing the precinct gives you an excellent feel for the makeup of your precinct and provides you with help for working in the precinct. Knowing where your Democrats are will decrease your workload and increase Democratic turnout during election cycles. Providing the county chair with updates and corrections ensures that campaign volunteers will be working with the latest information.

Organize the Precinct and Keep Voter Lists Current:

Use a notebook, 3x5 cards, or a computer to keep track of the Democrats in the precinct. Work with the Democrats in the precinct to find people who will help you with your duties.

Once a month take the voter list and drive or walk around the precinct. Note homes for sale. When the sign comes down contact the new owners by phone or mail and update the voter list. Sample 'Welcome to the neighborhood' letter and postcard are located in Appendix G. Additionally, during election cycles (any type of election), walk or drive around the precinct and note who has whose yard sign; it may be a good indication of the voter's leanings.

Keep the county chair informed of all changes to the voter list.

Keeping your list current and the county list current ensures that the Party will have the latest information during election cycles.

Get to Know the People in the Precinct:

Organize activities in the precinct to bring people together. For assistance, use canvassing volunteers or request assistance from the county chair or local Democratic clubs. Hold coffees, backyard parties, BBQs, and block parties. Begin these get-togethers with fellow Democrats, then move on to non-primary voters

and non-voters. Additionally, meet neighbors at homeowner association meetings and other such community activities.

Meeting neighbors and bringing people together will increase your number of available volunteers, increase the voter turnout for the Democratic Party, and win elections.

Representing the Precinct

Represent precinct at County Executive Committee meetings: Attendance at every County Executive Committee meeting is ESSENTIAL, because the County Executive Committee directs the operations of the County Party!

Getting Our Voters to the Polls

Get our voters to the polls: It is important for precinct chairs to ensure every Democrat in the precinct votes in the Democratic Primary and General Election. Talk to every Democrat prior to the start of early voting. Keep in touch during early voting and mark those off that have voted. Talk to those that have not yet voted between early voting and Election Day, and encourage them to vote on Election Day.

Bridging the Gap to Elected Officials

Bridge the gap between the Precinct and elected officials: A precinct chair can be a "bridge" or liaison between the people in the precinct and elected officials. Through Party activities get to know the elected officials that cover the precinct. The precinct chair can help a citizen or community group secure appropriate assistance with a particular problem or concern by contacting elected officials.

Knowing your elected officials will make it easier to participate in Party activities, increase your status within your precinct with both its citizens and elected officials, and make it easier to gain assistance when needed.

Finding Judges, Alternate Judges, and Election Clerks

Find election judge/alternate and clerks for your Precinct: The precinct chair assists the County Party in securing an election judge or alternate election judge and/or election clerks for voting precincts. It is important that Democratic people working inside the polling place are assertive and well informed so voters see someone they know and to prevent voter intimidation.

It is usually important that a precinct chair not be judge, alternate judge, or clerk. The precinct chair should be getting Democrats and like-minded voters to the polls.

In a precinct with voter intimidation problems or significant voter confusion with the voting systems, it can be more useful for the precinct chair to be the election judge, alternate judge, or clerk. It does no good to get a voter to the polls if the voter is intimidated into leaving or confused by the voting system in the polling place. The precinct chair should be someone the voters know and trust.

Knowing the Party Rules

Know the *TDP Rules* and *Texas Election Code*: As the Party's representative in the precinct it is important that the precinct chair to understand the *TDP Rules* and *Texas Election Code*.

The rules are available on line at www.txdemocrats.org. Copies of the rules may be available from your county chair or your senate district SDEC committee-members. Election training may be available from the county chair, the county clerk, or county election officer.

Term of Office and Qualifications

The precinct chair is a publicly elected party official and is elected by precinct voters in the Democratic Primary Election (or in the runoff election, if no candidate gets a majority in the first primary).

The term of office for a precinct chair is two years, beginning on the 20th day following the Primary runoff election. The County Executive Committee fills vacancies for unexpired terms.

A precinct chair should be an outgoing, self-motivated person who likes people.

To be eligible for the office of precinct chair, an individual must meet these requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a qualified voter who has voted in the latest Democratic primary (not counting runoffs) in the voting year
- Be a resident of the precinct from which he or she is seeking election
- Not be a candidate for or holder of an elective office of the federal, state, or county government
- (Optional, but highly desirable) have Internet and e-mail capabilities and basic computer skills

Filing for Office

A qualified individual interested in running for precinct chair must do the following:

- Obtain a filing form from the county chair or county party secretary
- Complete the application
- Sign the application before a notary public
- Have the form notarized
- Submit the application in the period that begins in late October and ends at 6:00 PM on the first business day in January
- Check the filing deadline when you pick up your application. The completed, signed, and notarized application may be mailed to the county chair, but it must be received by the filing deadline.

Only contested candidates for Precinct chair appear on the Democratic Primary ballot. Write-in votes for precinct chair are permitted in the primary, whether or not there are other candidates on the ballot, but not in a runoff. Write-in candidates must have filed their write-in candidacies.

Filling Vacancies

Precinct chair vacancies for unexpired terms are filled by the County Executive Committee (CEC) at a properly called meeting. The required quorum for a CEC meeting to fill a vacancy is a majority (greater than 50%) of filled precinct chairs.

Auxiliary Precinct Positions

Precinct chairs are responsible for a remarkable amount of work, and assistance is almost always required to accomplish the endless list of necessary tasks. This assistance can come from anyone willing to help the precinct chair, even from those not in the precinct, although that is preferred. There are no official names for those rendering assistance, nor are these official party positions. They are invaluable to the precinct chair, however, and therefore to the county and state parties, elected officials, and candidates.

- **Precinct Coordinator:** The precinct coordinator is not an official Party position, but if an elected precinct chair is unable or unwilling to do the work, a precinct coordinator should be chosen to carry on Party activities in the precinct. A precinct chair may choose to have a precinct coordinator to provide assistance.

- **Block Captains:** The block captain is not an official Party position. A block captain resides in the precinct and assists the precinct chair in the coordination of Democratic activities on that person's block or area.

The Ideal Precinct

The ideal precinct has an active precinct organization, led by the precinct chair. The precinct coordinator and active block captains on every street work closely together to find Democrats and others that lean our way; keep them informed; and, organize opportunities for them to get together. Democratic candidates are invited into the precinct to meet with voters and are provided assistance by the precinct's organization. Elected officials are kept apprised of the precinct's concerns and respond to the precinct chair's inquiries.

The precinct organization meets frequently to socialize, plan, and carry out Party building activities. At election time they work even harder to get out the vote for our candidates.

Elected Official and Candidate Cooperation with Precinct Chairs

Here are some of the ways you, as a candidate or elected official, can help a precinct chair:

- Invite precinct chairs to "addressing parties" and let them add messages to the cards or letters being sent to their precincts (except when using bulk mail). It is too expensive for most precinct chairs to pay the full price for mailing literature.
- Offer to block walk with precinct chairs or their representatives in the precinct.
- Invite precinct chairs to help plan an event that includes their precincts, such as a rally in a local park with games and light refreshments.
- Learn precinct chairs' names, and send them handwritten notes or make personal telephone calls.
- Personally greet and thank each precinct chair or election judge when they bring the ballot boxes to the courthouse on each Election Day.
- Remember that they already have jobs, and they are trying to help you get one or keep one.
- Ask for advice about their precincts, and seriously consider the advice that they give you.
- In the primary, positively tell why you are the best candidate. Do not criticize your opponents to the precinct chairs. Remember that we are all Democrats, and we are going to need each other.
- Encourage people who are active in a campaign to fill vacant precinct chair positions.

How to get Precinct Voters to the Polls

The precinct has been canvassed. New voters have been registered. Lists are up-to-date and everybody likely to vote for Democratic candidates is known. Friends and other volunteers are ready to help.

Ideally, the precinct chair will be part—the most important part—of a larger integrated campaign plan and organization. Precinct chairs, as part of the County Executive Committee, and other precinct organizers should be involved from the beginning in planning the campaign for the whole county, including specific activities for Election Day and the early voting period.

Each county is different, of course, and will have a different plan, but the job of precinct chair remains basically the same on Election Day:

- Contact all known Democratic voters to make sure they vote (or have already voted during the early voting period or by mail).
- Contact voters identified as likely to vote for Democrats to make sure they vote.
- Keep records of your contacts throughout the day as well as the turnout at your polling place so that you can report this information to your headquarters.

- Provide or know who in your area is providing rides to the polls. Many candidates help to arrange this service, or the County Party may have arranged for a pool of volunteer drivers.
- Find volunteers to work at the polling place handing out candidate literature and to be on the phone calling voters. You may also be asked to help get volunteers for a central phone bank or other joint efforts or to help in other precincts.
- Know what to do or where to call in your county for answers to questions about election law, voting fraud, or unfair practices taking place at your poll.

Precinct Chair vs. Election Judge - General Election

It is no longer the case that the election judge and precinct chair are synonymous. The precinct chair should be getting Democrats and like-minded voters to the polls, while the election judge should be running the election.

Rationale:

- The precinct chair is a partisan Party position.
- The election judge is a non-partisan position.
- There is no law prohibiting a precinct chair from being an election judge.
- The precinct chair usually should **not** be the election judge.
- The precinct chair should help find judges, alternate judges, and clerks

As stated earlier, in some cases it is more useful for the precinct chair to be the election judge, alternate judge, or clerk. This should be the exception rather than the rule.

The County Executive Committee (CEC)

The County Executive Committee (CEC) is composed of the precinct chairs of each of the county's voting precincts and the county chair. The county chair calls and presides over CEC meetings. Precinct chairs may also call meetings through a petition process. Elected local and county Democratic officials are not members of the CEC but should be invited to all meetings.

County Executive Committee administers the following business of the County Party:

- By statute, the CEC has certain responsibilities for the conduct of the Democratic Primary in the county.
- By *TDP Rules*, the CEC may adopt continuing rules for the conduct of its business.
- By *TDP Rules*, the CEC shall have primary responsibility for planning and integrating the General Election campaigns of the Democratic Party's nominees within the county. This includes the following responsibilities:
 - Raising funds for conducting local campaigns
 - Supporting the statewide effort for the entire ticket
 - Developing materials
 - Integrating local services for all Democratic campaigns
 - Optionally, establishing precinct committees to facilitate and coordinate within the formal party structure

Responsibilities of the County Executive Committee

Grassroots efforts are more effective with an active, engaged County Executive Committee (CEC). Ideally these activities are done as the CEC; however, if the CEC is unable to meet a quorum to make

decisions, the county chair is still responsible for seeing that statutory requirements for running a primary are met.

The CEC has the following responsibilities:

- Establish basic County Party goals and objectives
- Electing a county party secretary and treasurer
- Establish a budget and prepare election finance planning
- Establish standing party committees and appoint committee members
- Establish steering committees as necessary
- Assist the county chair in recruiting active precinct chairs
- Establish a County Primary Committee with these responsibilities:
 - Plan Primary Election financing
 - Organize and train Primary Election personnel (election, administrative, volunteers)
 - Secure election equipment, contract for special services
 - Obtain rental agreements for polling places and central counting location
 - Coordinate with the County Election Administrator on voter registration lists and related election activities
 - Conduct election training schools
 - Provide for voter education programs
 - Conduct other related Primary Election activities as provided for by statute and *TDP Rules*
- Establish General Election campaign committees to do the following:
 - Prepare and plan election financing
 - Provide voter education programs
- Campaign
 - Conduct the Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign
 - Conduct other related General Election activities as provided for by statute and *TDP Rules*

County Executive Committee Steering Committees

A CEC may form steering committees to assist in completing any specific task. Steering committees should involve and represent all Democrats in the community, officeholders, candidates, party officers, and constituency groups.

County Executive Committee Meetings

There are two types of County Executive Committee (CEC) meetings, statutory and non-statutory. CEC meetings are called by the county chair or by petition of the precinct chairs. It is the responsibility of the party calling the meeting to set the agenda. CEC members shall be notified in writing at least five days in advance of the meetings.

To conduct routine business in most counties, a quorum consists of 25% of filled precinct chairs. A majority (greater than 50%) must be present to conduct vacancy elections. Provided a quorum is met, elections require a majority vote (50% plus at least 1) of those in attendance at a properly called CEC meeting.

By the *TDP Rules*, many CECs are required to meet quarterly. See the *TDP Rules* for details. In election years Texas law requires three statutory CEC meetings.

Statutory County Executive Committee Meetings

The following are the statutory meetings:

- First meeting: January
- Second meeting: Thursday or Friday following the second Tuesday in March (to canvass Primary election)
- Third meeting: Thursday or Friday following the second Tuesday in April (runoff primary)

The following is the order of business at each of the three required meetings:

The First Meeting

This meeting must perform the following duties:

- Receive from the county chair the names of all candidates for state, district, county, and precinct offices as certified to appear on the ballot
- Determine by lot (drawing) the order in which these names will appear on the ballot
- Approve the county chair's appointment of the five-member Primary Committee (or, by resolution, change its composition), which has the duty to make up the official ballot
- Give final approval as to which voting systems (paper or machine ballots) shall be used in the primaries and early voting. [voting systems were probably previously determined by a committee]
- Assist and approve the county chair's appointment of election judges and alternates
- Order the consolidation of two or more county election precincts if necessary, and select the polling places [precinct groupings should have been done earlier].
- Set the hour (at 7:15 PM) and place of precinct conventions to be held on the day of the first primary
- Give final approval for the time and place of the county/senatorial district convention to be held on the third Saturday after the first or general primary
- Give final approval to the precinct groupings, where necessary, for purposes of caucusing to elect delegates at the county/senatorial district convention
- Hear the appointments made by the county chair for each senatorial district; appointee must live in the senate district

The Second Meeting

This meeting has the following duties:

- Canvass and certify the returns of the first or general primary by comparing poll lists with the tally lists and return sheets to determine those candidates for county and precinct offices who received the necessary votes for nomination
- Determine the particular offices for which no candidate received a majority of votes cast and order that the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes for that office be placed on the ballot for the runoff primary
- Determine by lot (drawing) the order in which these names appear on the ballot

The Third Meeting

This meeting has only one duty, canvass and certify the returns of the runoff primary

Filling Vacancies

The CEC may be asked to submit a nominee for a vacancy of an elected office that occurs when the party's nominee cannot be on the ballot for the General Election. The required quorum for a CEC meeting to fill a vacancy is a majority (greater than 50%) of filled precinct chairs.

The County Chair

The county chair is the leader and presiding officer of the county Democratic Party. The county chair is responsible for a multitude of duties and, along with the County Executive Committee, is responsible for organizing and strengthening the Party at the county level.

A county chair should be outgoing, self-motivated, and organized.

Duties and Responsibilities

The county chair's official and unofficial duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recruiting enthusiastic, responsible people to serve as precinct chairs or precinct coordinators in every precinct in the county
- By rules, training precinct chairs
- Calling and chairing meetings of the County Executive Committee
- Bringing together the diverse groups within the Democratic Party and local community
- Raising funds for the local effort
- Recruiting, training, and managing volunteers and volunteer program
- Building and maintaining a local Party database
- Organizing and assisting local Democratic clubs and organizations
- Developing and maintaining a good working relationship with the local media and representing the Party with the media
- Representing the county Party to candidates, officeholders, and local, state, and national Democratic organizations
- Supervising party office staff authorized by the County Executive Committee
- Recruiting and developing candidates
- Executing/administering of the Primary Election and Primary fund
 - Establish a budget
 - Order and keep inventories of office/election supplies
 - Handle the money provided by the state and candidate filing fees
 - Determine the order of candidates' names on the ballot
 - Certify the Democratic Party Ballots
 - Canvass the results
 - Pay election workers
- Preparing for conducting the precinct and county conventions
- Opening campaign headquarters
- Establishing phone banks and block walks
- Targeting and canvassing voters

At the first mandatory CEC meeting prior to the Primary, if a county has more than one senate district, the county chair appoints a temporary chair for each respective senatorial district within their county. The temporary chair must live in the senate district and is responsible for assisting the county chair with the coordination and organization of the county/senatorial convention.

Term of Office and Qualifications

To be eligible for the office of county chair, an individual must meet these requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a qualified voter who has voted in the latest Democratic primary (not counting runoffs) in the voting year
- Be a resident of the county from which he or she is seeking election
- Not be a candidate for or holder of an elective office of the federal, state, or county government
- (Optional but highly desirable) have Internet and e-mail capabilities and basic computer skills

Filing for Office

The county chair is a publicly elected party official and is elected by precinct voters in the Democratic Primary Election (or in the runoff election, if no candidate gets a majority in the general primary).

A qualified individual interested in running for county chair must do the following:

- Obtain a filing form from the county chair, the secretary of the County Party, or from the State Party
- Complete the application
- Sign the application before a notary public
- Have the filing form notarized
- Submit the application to the county chair in the period that begins in early December and ends at 6:00 PM on the first business day in January. The specific opening date is 30 days before the first business day in January of an election year. The form may be submitted in either of two ways:
 - Hand the completed, signed, and notarized application to the county chair
 - Optionally, mail the completed, signed, and notarized application to county chair, but it must be received by the filing deadline
- In very large counties (population greater than 1 million), submit a petition containing the signatures of 15 percent of the current precinct chairs in the county. A sample of the petition can be found in Appendix K.

If the county chair is running for reelection, the county chair keeps the application.

The names of county chair candidates appear on the Democratic Primary Ballot. Write-in votes are permitted in the primary, whether or not there are other candidates on the ballot, providing the candidates must have filed their write-in candidacies. Write-in votes are not permitted in a runoff.

Filling Vacancies

County chair vacancies for unexpired terms are filled by the County Executive Committee at a properly called meeting. The meeting may be called by the outgoing county chair, the county Party secretary, or by the State Chair if there is neither a current county chair nor secretary. The required quorum for a CEC meeting to fill a vacancy is a majority (greater than 50%) of filled precinct chairs.

Chapter 4 Delegate and Convention System

The Texas Democratic Party (TDP, State Party, the Party) holds conventions in even-numbered years to conduct the business of the Party. Involvement in the TDP three-level convention system is highly encouraged. Detailed information on each convention may be seen in the appendices.

These are the three levels of the TDP convention system:

- **Level 1: Precinct Conventions** are open to everyone in that precinct who voted in the Democratic Primary.
- **Level 2: County Conventions [or Senatorial District Conventions in counties that have multiple Senatorial Districts]** are open to delegates elected in the precinct conventions in that county or senatorial district.
- **Level 3: State Convention** is open to delegates elected by delegates in county and senatorial district conventions. Seating is by senate district.

To be a delegate to the state convention, a Democratic Primary voter must first be elected as one of the allotted precinct delegates to the county / senatorial district convention. The delegates from the precinct convention attend the county / senatorial district convention where they elect the delegates to the state convention. The numbers are determined by the number of Democratic votes cast for governor in the last gubernatorial election.

In presidential years, Texas delegates to the national convention are elected at the state convention.

Precinct Conventions

Democratic primary voters meet on the evening of the Primary Election to hold the precinct convention and to do the following:

- Elect delegates to the county or senatorial district convention. In presidential election years, the delegates are elected based on presidential preference
- Adopt resolutions that will be submitted to the county or senatorial district convention

The precinct chair prepares for the precinct convention and typically acts as its temporary chair. However, if the precinct chair is not available, any interested Democratic primary voter from the precinct may convene the meeting.

The County Party provides a convention packet with instructions, forms, and easy-to-fill-in agenda/minutes. The packet is typically kept at the polling place on the Primary Election day.

The precinct convention is open to anyone who voted in the Democratic Primary that day or during the early voting period. By Texas law, the precinct convention begins at 7:15 PM.

It is called to order by the temporary chair at the precinct's polling location. The precinct convention is typically at the polling location.

A detailed explanation of the precinct convention can be seen in Appendix A.

County / Senatorial District Conventions

County and Senatorial District conventions elect delegates to the state convention and conduct the business of the Party. Local, state, and federal candidates and elected officials should be invited to the convention. The purposes of the county or senatorial district conventions, in the urban counties with multiple senate districts, are the following:

- To elect delegates and alternates to the State Convention
- To adopt resolutions that will be passed on to the State Convention
- Optionally, to establish platform positions for inclusion in the *State Party Platform*

The county and senatorial district conventions are held on the third Saturday after the first Primary. However, if that date occurs during Passover or on the day following Good Friday, the convention is held on the next Saturday that does not occur during Passover or on the day following Good Friday.

The convention shall be properly publicized and in accordance with state law. The location must be easily accessible and large enough to accommodate all participants. The time and location of the county convention is determined by county executive committee; the senatorial district convention by the senate district committee.

A county convention is held when the county is in a single senate district. It is organized by the county chair and county executive committee. The SDEC committee members may also give assistance.

A senatorial district convention is held when the senate district encompasses several counties and/or parts of counties. However, it is more common that county conventions are held that include senate district caucuses. A senate district convention is organized by the senate district committee. The SDEC committee members may also give assistance.

When a combined county/senatorial district convention is held, the delegates sign in according to their senate district. The convention begins with all of the delegates together and then splits into senate district caucuses to conduct the remainder of the convention's business. A detailed explanation of the county convention and senate district convention can be seen in Appendix B.

County and senatorial conventions function with the use of the following four committees:

- **Credentials Committee** - The Credentials Committee signs in delegates and alternates; establishes the permanent roll of the convention; and makes recommendations to the convention to resolve challenges to credentials of delegates to the state convention.
- **Nominations Committee** - The Nominations Committee ensures the proper number and breakdown of delegates to the State Convention.
- **Platform and Resolutions Committee** - The Platform and Resolutions Committee considers resolutions submitted to the Convention and makes recommendations on those resolutions to the Convention.
- **Rules and Procedures Committee** - The Rules and Procedures Committee ensures the convention follows appropriate protocols and *TDP Rules*.

Either the County Executive Committee or the senate caucus, made up of precinct chairs within the senate district, selects the committee members.

Note to convention goers - the convention occasionally goes into a recess when some committees meet. This time may be used for listening to candidates, attending workshops, listening in on the committee meetings, or visiting old friends and meeting new ones.

County / Senatorial Convention Senate District Caucus

A Senate District Caucus is a subdivision of a senate district and is an essential part of the convention process and consists of convention delegates.

Pre-convention, the caucus consists of all of the delegates elected at the precinct conventions to the county/senatorial convention from within a single county or portion of a single county of a senate district. Two examples: (1) In a senate district that has several counties, the delegates of County **A** would be a senate district caucus; the delegates of County **B** would be another caucus, etc. (2) In a senate district that has portions of several counties, the delegates in County **X** within that senate district would be a caucus, the delegates in County **Y** within that senate district would be another caucus, etc.

Prior to the county/senatorial convention, the purpose of the senate district caucus is to organize the county/senatorial convention senate district caucus and to select convention committee chairs and committee members.

At the county/senatorial convention, the purpose of the caucus is to conduct the business of the convention, including electing senate district delegates to the state convention.

Senate District Delegation

The senate district delegation is made up of all the delegates and alternates that are elected to attend the state convention from the county/senatorial district conventions.

At the state convention, the senate district delegates elect state convention committee members, Senate District Executive Committee members, and in presidential years, delegates to the national convention depending on the process selected by the senate district committee.

State Convention Senate District Caucus

The senate district caucus is a sub-division of the senate district at the state convention and consists of the delegates from a single county or portion of a single county within the senate district. It has the same geographical boundaries as the senate district caucus at the county/senatorial district convention. The purpose of the senate district caucus at the state convention is to recommend or select state convention committee members, SDEC members, and in presidential years, delegates to the national convention, depending on the process selected by the senate district committee.

The senate district caucus at the state convention is made up of state convention delegates elected at the county/senatorial district convention. It should not be confused with the senate district caucus that occurs at the county/senatorial district convention, which is made up of delegates to the county/senatorial district convention elected at the precinct conventions.

For additional information on the individual conventions, see the appendices.

State Convention

The purpose of the State Convention is to conduct the following business of the Party:

- Elect the Party's officers
- Elect the SDEC senate district committee members
- Pass resolutions
- Adopt a platform
- Additionally, in presidential years, elect Democratic National Committee members and delegates and alternates to the National Convention

A full meeting of the State Democratic Executive Committee precedes the two-day State Convention. Specific information about the State Convention is mailed to each delegate and alternate in advance of the event. Information is also available on the Internet.

The Texas State Convention is held in June of even-numbered years at a location selected by the State Democratic Executive Committee.

Elected delegates and alternates are grouped by senate district.

Guest passes may be available from the State Party office for the limited seating available.

Because the purpose of the convention is to conduct Party business, attendees should understand that not every moment will be exciting. The convention occasionally goes into a recess when some committees meet. This time may be used for listening to candidates, attending workshops, listening in on the committee meetings, or visiting old friends and meeting new ones.

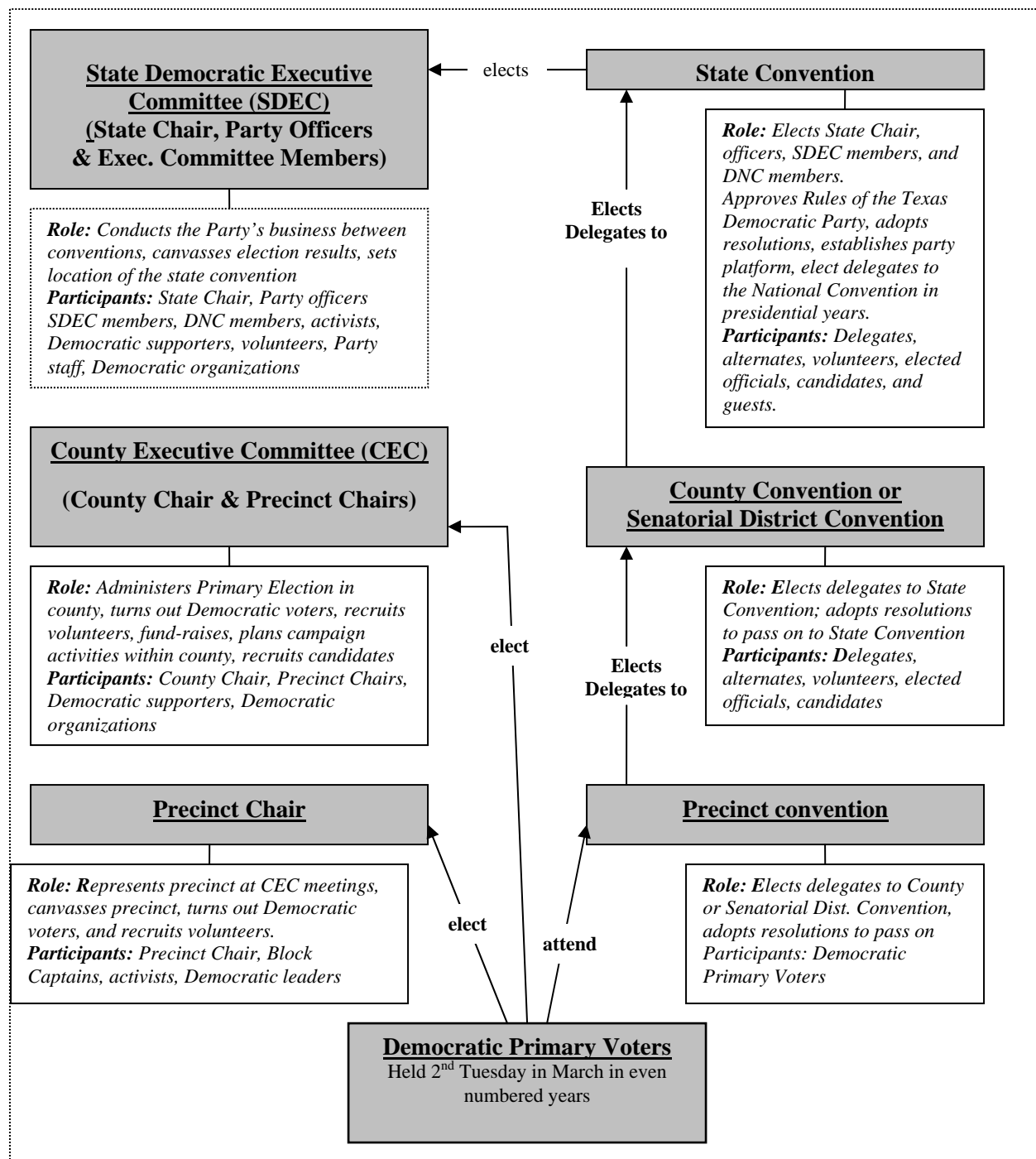
National Convention

In presidential years, the Democratic National Committee convenes a national convention with the set purpose of nominating the Democratic nominees for president and vice-president.

The process to become a delegate or alternate begins, in general, at the precinct convention when the attendees sign in under their presidential preference, while the specific rules for national convention and delegate selection vary from one convention to the next. That preference is carried forward to the county/senatorial district convention and on to the state convention. Prior to attending the state convention, anyone wishing to be a delegate or alternate to the national convention files a request to be a delegate and/or alternate with the DNC.

Delegates and alternates to the national convention are selected in the senate district caucuses. The nominations committee fills the remainder of the Texas delegation.

Organization Chart of the Texas Democratic Party



Chapter 5 Fundraising and Financial Reporting

Fundraising

Raising money is necessary and difficult. Party and campaign financial needs are different, so this section deals with some basics that apply to both types of fundraising. Fundraising is best organized by a person or committee devoted to that function.

Budget, Fundraising, and Goals

It is critically important to have an operating budget. A budget is developed by determining what activities are planned and estimating their costs. It is best then to set fundraising goals and raise funds to pay for these activities.

Table 1 below is a sample of an election year budget. Table 2 is designed to help set fundraising goals.

Table 1. Sample Annual Operating Budget (Democratic Party of Midland)

Revenue		Amount	% of Total
	Pardner' Up! Annual Campaign	\$45,000.00	75
	Events (ie. Inaugural Ball, Convocation)	\$12,000.00	20
	Misc. (i.e. Coord. Campaign)	\$3,000.00	5
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$60,000.00	100
Expenses			
	Critical Operating Expense		
	Headquarters Expenses	\$12,000.00	20%
	Strategic Plan Priority		
	Marketing (GOTV, Advertising, V. Reg.)	\$9,000.00	15%
	Convocation (Summer Meeting)	\$6,000.00	10%
	Volunteer Coordination	\$3,000.00	5%
	Party Development (Pct. Chair Recruitment, Meetings)	\$3,000.00	5%
	Candidate Development and Training	\$4,500.00	7.5%
	Affiliates (Young Democrats)	\$3,000.00	5%
	Headquarters' Staff Person	\$13,500.00	22.5%
	Candidate Support	\$3,000.00	5%
	Rainy Day Fund	\$3,000.00	5%
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$60,000.00	100%

Table 2. Party / Campaign / Club Goals

Fundraising Goals	30-day Goal	60-day Goal	90-day Goal	6-month Goal
Sustaining members recruited				
High-dollar contributors identified				
Party fundraisers organized				
Party fundraisers attended				
In-kind contributions made				

Reasons to Give

The finance committee should develop and articulate reasons people want to contribute money. Generally, people are motivated to give money by the following:

- Personalities with charisma, intelligence, talent, and influence
- Power that comes from affiliation with a person or group
- Philosophy or ideology that supports what the contributor perceives is right and good
- Policies and programs that positively affect lives, serve interests, or confirm beliefs
- Political coalitions that advance causes and candidates
- Knowledge that their money will be used efficiently and effectively

A budget can be in itself an effective fundraising tool. Of course, the plan and budget should not be generally distributed, but it may be useful in discussions with business and professional people.

It is useful to let other prospective contributors know exactly what their money can do, e.g., their \$25.00 contribution can buy 100 bumper stickers or a phone line for one month, etc.

Asking for Money

What is the number one reason people give money? They are asked! There are several fundraising methods. The three most common methods are through personal contact, by mail, and events.

Personal Contact: Personal contact is the most persuasive method of solicitation. Face-to-face contact, especially with someone the contributor knows, is impossible to ignore. Potential contributors should be matched with solicitors to whom they would most likely respond.

Use the telephone to make appointments for in-person solicitations or to contact other potential contributors. Calls should be followed up by a personal letter from the person who placed the call, from a candidate, or from the finance chair or county chair. A follow-up letter should always include a reply card and a return envelope. You can also use your volunteer phone bank to solicit contributions or to remind people about upcoming fundraising events.

Mail: Mail reaches more people in less time and is the least intrusive type of solicitation. However, direct mail solicitation requires an up-front investment of money and can be very costly unless carefully targeted and designed to assure an adequate response. When re-soliciting people who have given to the County Party in the past, the expected response should be between 3 and 5%. The response from blind mailing ("prospecting") is closer to a return of 1%.

Fundraising Events: Events, especially during campaign season, create enthusiasm and visibility for the Party, our elected officials, and our candidates. Events also provide a tangible "deadline" for receipt of contributions. In addition, while some people will contribute without expecting anything but a "thank you," others are more likely to respond if they get something more tangible in return.

Start with a realistic projection of how many tickets and sponsorships you can sell and determine from that how much you can spend on the event itself. If you think you can sell 400 tickets at \$20.00 and 20 sponsorships at \$100.00, your projected gross will be \$10,000. Keeping your costs at 25-30% of that, or \$2,500 or \$3,000, means you've got a little more than \$6.00 per person to spend—on everything, including invitations, postage, hall, food, and decorations. That arithmetic should tell you that you cannot afford to have a catered dinner at a nice hotel unless you can get everything donated.

Low-cost activities, if well planned and publicized, can attract people and make a profit: bake sales, garage sales, carnivals, BBQs, ice cream socials, car washes, rent parties. Be shameless: Use every opportunity to ask people to help or to contribute.

Several activities, from low-cost to high-dollar, are listed in the appendices.

Finding the Money / Contributors

Individuals

The best potential contributors are people who contribute. That's not a typo; it's a reminder to target people who are likely to give because they've given in the past.

Previous contributors are listed on past campaign finance reports on the Texas Ethics Commission website at www.ethics.state.tx.us/php/cesearch.html.

Presidential campaign contributors are listed by zip codes at www.fundrace.org. Additional information may be found at www.fec.gov.

Sponsors of previous events are another source of contributors. Candidates who are cooperating in the integrated campaign may provide their lists of contributors, and local Democratic clubs may allow the use of their membership lists.

Phone banking only to Democrats in heavily Republican precincts typically yields better results than general blanket calling.

Be flexible with contributors. Someone who cannot give you \$100 in a single contribution might be able to give you \$25 a month during the campaign. Be sure to include on fund-raiser invitations the option, "I can't come, but here's my contribution of \$_____." Add a line to ask for occupation and employer of the contributor, see Financial Reporting. If someone says to call back in a week or a month, do it.

Political Action Committees and Groups

Many unions, business associations, corporations, and environmental and civic groups have set up political action committees to make contributions. It is necessary to research and find the groups and make a special effort to contact each potential group contributor, see Financial Reporting.

In-Kind Contributions

Sometimes donations of goods or services are easier to obtain than cash contributions. Some people like to know exactly what their money has bought, so they may prefer to buy it for you and give it to you. (See Financial Reporting)

Financial Reporting and Compliance

WARNING! Due to the ambiguities and consequences for the Party created by the McCain-Feingold (BCRA) campaign law, County Executive Committees and clubs should avoid setting up Federal PACs until they've checked with the State Democratic Party Office 512-478-9800 and thoroughly explored all the ramifications! If you already have one established, please check with the State Party Office for important information. The information below covers contributions for state elections and party building activities.

When to Register as a Political Action Committee

As a general rule, money raised and spent to affect an election, or to support candidates or issues, or to promote a political party must be publicly disclosed. Therefore, not only candidates and officeholders are required to register with the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC), but county parties, clubs, and organizations that raise and spend money for political purposes must register if they meet specific criteria.

There are two types of Texas Political Action Committees (PACs): General-Purpose Political Committees (GPACs) and Specific-Purpose Political Committees (SPACs).

GPACs are for organizations that support or oppose more than one candidate or issue, while SPACs are for organizations that support or oppose specific (usually single) candidates or issues. Organizations that register with the TEC are required to appoint a treasurer, who is required to submit reports at specified intervals. Information about PACs and reporting can be found at www.ethics.state.tx.us.

County Party / County Executive Committees

A County Party / County Executive Committee has a special registration threshold, different from any other kind of political organization under Texas law. The Executive Committee can raise or spend \$25,000 in political funds in each calendar year without having to register as a political committee. The Executive Committee (1) must keep all records of political contributions and expenditures as if it were a political committee; (2) if it exceeds the \$25,000 threshold, must appoint a campaign treasurer within 15 days; and (3) must include the first \$25,000 of activity on its first report.

Clubs and Other Organizations

Most Party club and organization activities fit the definition of GPAC. A group can raise or spend \$500 before having to appoint a campaign treasurer, register with the TEC, and start filing reports. **The \$500 threshold is a one-time, cumulative threshold.** This does not apply to candidates, who must appoint a campaign treasurer before they raise any contributions or make any expenditures. This must be done no later than the date they file for a place on the ballot, because a filing fee is a political expenditure.

Once registered, a club or organization must wait 60 days and have contributions from at least 10 contributors before it can make any further political expenditure. Non-registered groups must be careful during a campaign, because if they exceed the \$500 threshold in the middle of a campaign and are not registered, they will be "frozen" from doing any further activity.

Candidates

Depending on the position being sought, a candidate must register with either the Federal Elections Commission, the Texas Ethics Commission or the county clerk. County and lower offices register with the county clerk. Contact the Texas Ethics Commission if there are any questions.

Important Note: A candidate must register a treasurer before ANY campaign expenditures are made, including a filing fee.

Where to Get Information about Political Reporting

The Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) is the authority on political reporting. It is critical that all rules, regulations, and laws are followed in regards to political reporting. To obtain information about Title 15 (the political funds section of the Election Code), or about candidate and officeholder personal financial disclosure requirements, or about lobbying regulations, you should contact the TEC:

Texas Ethics Commission	Voice	512-463-5800
201 E. 14th Street	Toll-free	800-325-8506
10th Floor	Fax	512 463-5777
Austin, TX 78701	Website	www.ethics.state.tx.us/
or		
P.O. Box 12070		
Austin, TX 78711-2070		

Political Advertising and Disclaimers

A disclaimer tells the public who has paid for a political communication. The general rule: disclaim everything. Texas law says that most political advertising must disclose that it is political advertising and who paid or contracted to pay for it. The disclaimer must be on the face of the advertising.

Political advertising is any "communication supporting or opposing a candidate for nomination or election to a public office or office of a political party, a political party, a public officer, or a measure that: (A) in return for consideration is published in a newspaper, magazine, or other periodical or is broadcast by radio or television; or (B) appears: (i) in a pamphlet, circular, flier, billboard or other sign, bumper sticker, or similar form of written communication; or (ii) on an Internet website."

Questions, Problems, Help If help is needed with record keeping or reports, please call the Texas Democratic Party office at 512-478-9800. The State Party Office will do what they can to help, or make a referral. Do not wait until the day before a report is due or until you're standing at the newspaper office with your ad in hand, to start asking questions.

Chapter 6 The Democratic Message

A message provides a context for how Democratic actions on key issues fit into the beliefs and fundamental values of our communities, our state, and nation. Messages are based on a common theme or series of themes, focusing on specific issues.

Messages come in two forms, oral and written. While their development is similar, their content and delivery differ. Oral messages are short and typically limited to no more than three issues at a time, while the written message may go into greater detail and cover up to three issues. In some cases, more than three issues may be covered in written messages.

Message Components

Themes: A theme is a unifying idea that is a recurrent element in a campaign. Themes are typically set by the campaign. A few examples are, but not limited to: Public Service, Better Government, Open Government, Take Back the 9th, Putting People First, The New Deal, The New Frontier, Leave No Child Behind, Opportunity for All, A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats, Keep Hope Alive, and Turn District 22 Blue.

Issues: An issue is a matter of public concern and the list of Democratic issues is extensive. A few examples are, but not limited to: Protecting Social Security, Protecting the Right to Privacy in our Homes, Public Education, Health Care Accessibility, Choice, Equal Rights, Environment, Free Speech, Jobs, Living Wages, Investing in Public Education, and Giving Patients the Right to Choose a Doctor.

Values: Democrats support principles, ideals, standards, and qualities considered worthwhile, and policies that honor parents, nurture children, and provide opportunity for every responsible individual. A few examples are Freedom, Opportunity, Prosperity, Community, Service, Cooperation, Trust, Honesty, Empathy, Responsibility and the Strength to Carry out that Responsibility, Protection, Fairness, Fulfillment in Life, and Open Communication.

Effective Oral Messages

An effective message is a short communication that conveys an idea or series of ideas. The message must be framed in such a manner as to invoke a mental picture to convey the fundamental beliefs of our Party.

An effective message:

- Will be meaningful with local facts or individual anecdotes
- Will be relevant to the audience
- Will be about Democratic values, not programs
- Will be theme consistent
- Will be short
- Will be repeated over and over (no fewer than three times)

Effective Written Messages

A written message conveys an idea or series of ideas and allows for greater detail and depth. Like an oral message, the written message must be framed in such a manner as to invoke a mental picture to convey the fundamental beliefs of our Party.

An effective message:

- Will be relevant to the audience
- Will be theme consistent
- Will focus on Democratic values more so than programs

- Will use color (when possible)
- Will use pictures relevant to the material (when possible)
- Will contain no more than three issues

Effective “Pocket” Messages

A “pocket” message or “push card” is a small piece of material that is handed out. It conveys an idea or series of ideas in short statements.

An effective “pocket” message:

- Will be readable (ample blank space around easily read print)
- Will use color (when possible)
- Will be relevant to the audience
- Will use pictures or logos only as an accent
- Will usually contain no more than three issues

An example of an effective “pocket” message was a wallet-sized hand-out card developed by the Texas Democratic Party titled, *What it Means to be a Democrat*. See English and Spanish versions in Appendices I and J, respectively.

Chapter 7 Get The Message Out

There are many things that can be done to get out the Democratic message in your community:

Outreach: Attend meetings of other organizations, offer to give guest speeches, and participate when they have community forums, etc.

Letters to the Editor: Writing letters to the editor is an effective way to influence public opinion. Newspapers are more likely to publish a letter from a local resident than from the Communications Director of the Texas Democratic Party or even from an elected official.

Utilize Technology - Internet Web Pages, Blogs, Webcasting, E-mail Distribution Lists, Cell Phones, Pagers, and Text Messaging: Websites, blogs, webcasting and distributing information via e-mail distribution lists, cell phones, pagers and text messaging are excellent methods of distributing and displaying the Democratic message.

Distribute Press Releases: Press releases are used to distribute a Democratic message or invite the media to an event.

Call Radio Talk Shows: Call in to local radio talk shows to talk about the Democratic message or to refute someone else's message.

Use Print and Electronic Media: Print and electronic media allow for a wide distribution of the Democratic message to people who are not Party activists.

Outreach

Many organizations share the ideals of the Democratic Party. We can build more effective organizational or message efforts by getting our "allies" involved in the effort to elect those who champion our shared priorities. These are important ways to implement this effort:

- Join and work with allied groups, get to know their leaders and members, and get them involved in Democratic efforts. Invite them to events and to meet officeholders so you can conduct press events on "shared priorities," etc.
- Identify key "allied" leaders to serve as "credible third-party spokespersons" on behalf of our candidates, our party, and our shared message
- Encourage allied nonpartisan groups to hold bipartisan forums on their issue priorities, providing us an opportunity to deliver our majority message to the broader membership and the media

Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor is an effective method of delivering the Democratic message and an excellent vehicle for rapid response. Guidelines for submission are typically published. Abide by their rules of style and etiquette. Generally you can say what you really feel.

Read letters to the editor to identify like-minded activists and enlist them in your cause.

Writing Guide: A good letter to the editor is like a three-act play. Set the stage in your first paragraph. Then lay out the evidence to support your point in a clear and concise manner. Finally, make your point based on the information you have outlined:

- **Write Tight:** Keep it economical—two to four paragraphs with one or two sentences per paragraph. Explain your inspiration for writing the letter or column then make your point. Do not worry about winning the Pulitzer Prize. Simply write the way you talk.
- **Stick to the Facts:** Be prepared. Make your case with solid information and facts. Use your talking points or newspaper stories you've clipped or pulled from the Internet as a background resource or primer for letters and columns.

- **Use Examples:** Examples of Democratic issues are the \$3,000 teacher pay raise and state health insurance plan for teachers, health care coverage for 600,000 uninsured children, and a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. Examples of failed Republican leadership are the insurance crisis and poor fiscal management that allowed a record state budget surplus to become a record state deficit.
- **Stay on message:** Do not get sidetracked. Stick to your central message and theme.
- **Be Confident:** Write it with pride, but don't let your emotions distract from your point.
- **Be Cool:** Even though you might not agree, respect the rights of others to express their opinions.

Technology

Internet Web Pages - Blogs - Webcasting - E-mail Distribution Lists - Cell Phones - Pagers - Text

Messaging: Electronic methods of distributing the Democratic message are relatively new but are playing an ever increasing role in the political arena. In some cases they require financial resources and/or technical expertise.

Web Page: A web page is typically developed and maintained by a web master. It should have the following:

- An eye-catching banner
- Information about the Party or organization
- Current news
- Information on how to join or participate in Party or organization activities
- Contact information
- A calendar of events
- Links to other websites and blogs
- Frequent updates to maintain "freshness"

Blog : A web log or blog is a website dedicated to posting messages typically focused on a point of view, issue or issues. Messages are controlled by a traffic manager. The blog should have the following:

- An eye-catching banner
- Information about the focus of the blog
- Information on how to register and participate in the blog
- Contact information
- Links to other websites and blogs

Webcasting: Webcasting is a method of broadcasting live or delayed audio and/or video transmissions over the Internet. Political call-in shows are becoming common. Press conferences, activities, and events can also be webcast. Webcasters utilize computers, specialized computer applications, and the Internet to produce webcasts.

Cell Phones - Pagers - Text Messaging: These technologies allow for rapid distribution of information.

Radio Talk Show Call-in

Radio talk shows allow for immediate delivery of a message or response to someone else's message.

The caller should adhere to these guidelines:

- Remain calm and never be incited to make a rash response, no matter what
- Speak clearly at a moderate pace
- Be well informed on subject matter

- Never name-call or use profanity
- Never lie

Talk radio has emerged as a powerful medium for expressing political views and opinions. Call in and express support for the Democratic Party and its candidates. Let the talk show host know that you are “proud to be a Democrat” and remind listeners that our Party has a proven record of helping middle-class families.

Calling into a local radio talk show is very easy to do.

Many nationally syndicated programs are very conservative and in many cases have acted as unofficial “agents” of the Republican Party. They screen calls carefully, so it is not easy to “get through.”

Use Media Effectively - Print, Radio, TV and Electronic

In every community, there is a wide array of media outlets, each with its own audience and each with its own needs. Provide a media outlet with what it needs for its audience at the time it needs it, and excellent press coverage will follow.

Steps to Effective Media Relations

- Develop a **complete** media list
 - Locate every newspaper, radio station, TV station that serves the area
 - The Society for Professional Journalists may publish a media directory in large cities
 - Make a list of free newspapers
 - Make a list of professional or industry, special interest, minority, and college publications
 - Find out about local public affairs programs
 - Make a list of newsletters and websites of area Democratic clubs and affinity groups
- Develop contact information for **every** outlet
 - Get the names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses for a list of newsletters
 - Get the websites of area Democratic clubs and affinity groups
- Know the media
 - Make contact with and maintain relationships with editors and reporters who cover politics
 - Determine best format for each outlet [Mac vs. PC, e-mail vs. fax, etc.]
 - Schedule meetings with editorial boards once or twice a year
 - Continuously keep your contacts informed – mark FYI items to save them time
 - Get to know the reporters, develop a rapport, and maintain regular contact, even if not pushing a story or reacting to news. Know the reporters’ strengths, weaknesses, and interests.
 - Who is best for investigative reporting?
 - Who covers such beats as campaigns or governmental agencies?
 - Who has the most institutional knowledge?
 - Who works fastest, slowest?
 - Which newspaper has the most manpower and reporters readily available?
- Keep volunteers and allies informed and involved
 - Make sure that everyone knows the Democratic message
 - Bring together volunteers to help with media relations
 - Use volunteers for researching the media
 - Provide other community organizations with our message

- Have a publicity plan – for the overall campaign and for each event
 - o Identify individuals, community leaders and officeholders who can write columns and letters to the editor
 - o Decide on a regular schedule and stick to it. For example, a letter could be sent on a weekly, semi-weekly, or monthly basis
 - o Use the same approach for the electronic form of media—radio talk shows, local TV stations, etc. Call the news directors at local stations and ask to do live interviews.
 - o Plan events that look good on TV, so reporters take pictures and provide news coverage, such as large, enthusiastic rallies. Put a face on the issues by having people tell compelling personal stories. Make events appealing!
 - o Create a timeline for your plan, and make individuals responsible for specific tasks
 - o Place a publicity schedule in the campaign timeline

Media Tips

- Keep abreast of the news
 - o Scan the papers first thing every day
 - o Check news websites frequently
 - o Listen to radio and TV as often as you can
- Do your homework
 - o Know the essential facts, but don't get bogged down in details
 - o Back up your statement with information such as press clips, reports, and other materials
- Tell the truth
- Stay on message
 - o Be aware of what other Democrats are saying about the central issues
 - o Keep your answers within the framework of the Democratic Party positions on key issues
- Be aware of the basic guidelines and parameters for interviews
 - o Always assume you are “on the record”
 - o Don't be flippant or crude—anything you say could end up in print
- Be sensitive to timing. The old saying “Timing is everything” tends to hold true
 - o Know your local newspaper's deadlines and publication dates
 - o Time your events and releases with reporters' deadlines in mind
- Be proactive
 - o Don't just wait to respond to news
 - o Generate story ideas
 - o Package information to make the reporting job as simple as possible
 - o Anticipate calls and questions
- Be available. When people are regularly quoted in the press, you can be assured that is because they are very accessible, return calls, and have something quotable to say.
 - o Return calls to avoid lines in stories such as “could not be reached for comment”
 - o Do not refuse to comment
 - o When a reporter poses questions that cannot be answered sufficiently without more time and research, tell them you will call them back as soon as you can find the answers. (If you state a time by which you will respond, be sure to meet that deadline!)

- o Be confident—speak with conviction
- Understand that TV wants events that are visual. Spanish TV wants Spanish speakers. Radio needs someone who speaks well and clearly. Print media has more space to fill, so they need more details, quotes, and pictures.
- Look at all angles of a submitted press release. Different angles appeal to different media
- Never miss an opportunity for publicity
- Never answer a question for a candidate. Refer media calls to the candidate when possible

Press Releases

Press releases alert reporters about stands on particular issues or let the media know about particular events.

Think about what you are going to write. Make it something you want to see written and would be interested in reading. It should be very detailed and contain what the reporters need to write their pieces.

Structure and Form of a Press Release

You should consider the following structure and form when writing a press release:

- Use the organization's letterhead for press releases
- Type "For Immediate Release" on the top left corner and type the date below that
- Type the contact information on the top right corner. Include name of organization and the phone numbers of two contacts. Ensure that these contacts can be reached easily. Include home numbers if appropriate. Cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses are appreciated
- Type "MORE" at the end of each page when your press release is more than a page long
- Type the contact information on successive pages as well
- Type "####" at the end of the press release. This is how journalists indicate the end of news copy.

What the Press Release Should Contain

You should do the following when writing a press release:

- Make the headline captivate the reader. Use the most important information in the headline—up to four lines if necessary. Use a subheading if needed, but keep it short. The headline and first paragraph should be where you concentrate your writing efforts. Your points should be made early in the release. Think about what is most important.
- Make pertinent and important information visible. Reporters generally glance at a press release for about 30 seconds. Keep the paragraphs short, and try to limit paragraphs to three sentences.
- Use quotes from spokespersons in the third or fourth paragraph, and summarize your organization in the last paragraph.
- Mention photo opportunity, if there is one. Be sure to send a copy of the release to the photo desk.

Distributing a Press Release

You must make sure the press release gets to the proper people:

- Send a press release a week before an event and send it again the day before the event.
- Press releases may be faxed, e-mailed or some combination of the two.
- Most importantly, make follow-up calls. Make these calls the day before or the morning of the event. Have a copy of the release handy and ready to be faxed when making these calls.

Advancing Democratic Media Events

Locations

Advance work may mean scouting out one location or many locations to find the best place for an event. It means asking questions to anticipate every possible problem. For example, if the advance person is looking for a good work site, it means identifying possible sites in a given locale, visiting those sites and asking questions.

Are there good visuals such as clearly visible machinery, a lot of workers on the site? Is it a union shop? Is there a location at the site where a candidate or a representative of the Democratic Party can speak to the workers, such as in an area of the factory floor that could be used, a cafeteria? Is it too noisy?

Is there a time when the workers change shifts or the machines are shut down? When is it busiest?

Are there any problems with the company, such as recent layoffs, union disputes, and safety violations? Is the media welcome to attend and take pictures? Is there room for the media? Is it convenient for the media, or is it out of the way and will require long travel times?

Does the location tell you anything about the substance of your event? What do you see? That's the key test to apply when you're planning message events. What does the location tell you about the Democratic Party or the candidate?

What people see is sometimes more important than what they hear or read. The bottom line: Think visually.

Media Event Planning Tips

You need to follow all of the following media event planning tips:

- Match your location with your subject. If you're talking about health care, visit a health care clinic; jobs, visit a factory with workers; education, visit a classroom or job training site.
- Think big picture and small.
- Think people. You want to create events that put the Democratic Party in direct contact with people. If you visit a school, politely turn down the invitation to address the student body in the auditorium. That generally puts you on stage away from the kids. Opt for the gym or a classroom or the library. Take time to talk to individual kids, even if you have to kneel.
- Avoid distractions. Some factories are great visually, but too noisy. Some companies are willing to let you in for lunch breaks or other times when they shut down the machines.
- Think about what will be happening at your location during the time you've chosen.
- Always question crowd sizes. No doubt you'll have to ask someone how many people will be at a particular location when you're there, whether it is a factory, health clinic, lunch spot or school. Always check it out yourself. If you need 10 people and they say 10 people will be there, tell them you need 20 people. If 10 show up, you're covered. If 20 show, you're covered. Whenever possible, build or supplement a crowd yourself or double and triple check to make sure you'll have what you need.
- Get rid of the podium and you'll find you get better pictures with people involved in the subject you're covering. Whenever possible, avoid using a podium.
- Drive the day's schedule to ensure directions and travel times are correct. Do not do the test drive at midnight and assume you will make the location in the same 20 minutes. If your event takes place smack in the middle of rush hour, you'll be stuck in gridlock traffic when the event begins.

It's up to the advance person to make sure everything is as expected.

Did you anticipate a crowd at the senior center, but when you arrived everyone was gone on a field trip? No one was there except the media? Plan for alternatives. Do you have supporters in the area who can

quickly build a senior crowd at the location? Can you move your event to another nearby location? Is there senior housing nearby where you can go door-to-door to talk to seniors?

An advance person must be absolutely unshakable—never appearing rattled, nervous, worried, anxious, short-tempered, or rude. Every crisis must be taken in stride and addressed efficiently, professionally, and politely.

Crisis Management

Media encounters can be pressure-filled events with rules, time limits, and even the occasional “cheap shot.” The twists and turns of a media situation can never be fully anticipated, but with discipline it is possible to maximize your control of the variables through a combination of knowledge, attitude, and strategy. The Texas Democratic Party, the county chair, the county executive committee, and the various candidate campaign offices should be consulted for the message.

Ensure that everyone understands how to respond in a crisis. For example, if you know protesters are coming to your event, try to arrange the site so those protesters cannot get close to the candidates. If you do not expect protesters, but they show up, do your best to isolate them in the rear of your event; get your crowd to drown them out; and if necessary, alert security or other officials.

What if the opposition shows up at your event or news conference? Generally, ignoring event-busters is the best advice. If that does not work, politely engaging them or inviting them to speak when you’re done may work. Pushing, shoving, shouting, slamming doors, locking people out, or generating a confrontation or fight generally does not accomplish anything positive. It does ensure a spot on the news, simply not the one you wanted.

National Campaigns

National campaigns rarely communicate directly with local media as they typically care more about getting coverage in big papers, such as the *New York Times*. Therefore, it is important to maintain good relations with local media and to give a “local flavor” to the campaign. It is also important to maintain good local relations. When the campaign is over, the national group is gone, but you still need coverage of your local events.

Chapter 8 The Election Cycle

The standard “election year” occurs in even-numbered years. It begins with campaigning at the end of the first business day in January when the official candidate filling period closes. Following campaigning, the Democratic Primary Election is held and a Run-off Election where needed. Campaigning begins for the November General Election.

The full election cycle includes the odd-numbered years, sometimes referred to as the “off-years,” with the Texas Democratic Party (TDP) strengthening activities at all levels.

Party Registration in Texas

Voter registration and elections in Texas are dictated by state and federal law. With the exception of special elections, Primary and General Elections occur in even-numbered years. To participate in any election, a person must be registered. Registered voters are mailed voter registration cards. These cards should be signed and protected, as they are helpful when you go to vote.

One “registers” as a Democrat by voting in the Democratic primary. Unlike many other states, one does not register with a particular party nor does a voter have to pre-register with a particular party to vote in its primary.

Any qualified Texas voter 18 years of age or older who supports the “Statement of Principles” listed in Article I of the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules)* may participate fully in any Party meetings. These qualified voters may be elected to any Party Office, except where specifically prohibited by law or by *TDP Rules*.

To run for precinct chair, county chair, Senate District Executive Committeeperson, county or senate district delegate or alternate, state or national convention delegate or alternate, one must have voted in the most recent Democratic Party Primary (not including any run-off).

Primary Election

Texas currently holds its Primary Elections in March of even-numbered years. The Democratic Primary of the TDP is open to any registered Texas voter who did not vote in another party's primary and who did not attend another party's political convention in that election cycle.

Special Note: Signing a petition to put a candidate on the ballot of a party counts as a declaration of party affiliation. Therefore, you may not sign a petition to put a Democrat on the ballot and vote in the Republican primary.

For a candidate to run as a Democrat in the General Election, the candidate must first register and run in the Democratic Primary. Registration dates and the dates of the Primary and run-off election are set by law. If there are no changes by the legislature, the Primary is held on the second Tuesday in March. If an opposed candidate does not receive more than 50% of the vote in the Primary, a Run-off Primary is held in April. As with the General Election, voting occurs on Election Day and during early voting, which typically begins approximately two weeks before Election Day.

To vote in the Primary and/or run-off, you must be a resident of your voting precinct and register to vote 30 days before the election. You may only vote in one political party's Primary. You may vote in a run-off election even if you did not vote in the Primary.

Your voting location may not be the same as for the general or local elections, because of the cost and complexity of the election. Locations and times of the Primary election are typically listed in the newspaper. You may also check with local Party officials or the county clerk's office. During early voting you can usually vote anywhere in your county, while on Election Day you must vote at your precinct's specified location. Precincts may be combined to save on personnel and money.

General Election

The General Election occurs on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

To participate in the General Election a voter must be a resident of the voting precinct and register 30 days before the election. Early voting begins approximately two weeks prior to Election Day.

Locations and times for early voting and the General Election are typically listed in the newspaper. For early voting a voter can usually vote anywhere in the county, while on Election Day a voter must vote at the location specified for the precinct.

Non-Partisan Elections

There are multitudes of nonpartisan elections across Texas, including, but not limited to, city, school board, MUD district, water district, navigation district, park board, library board, and port authority elections. It is important that Democrats for and serve in these various capacities.

Running for and serving in these offices provides excellent training for those with future political aspirations.

It is important that every Democrat participate in each of these elections, supporting candidates who support our causes and points of view. In some cases, it is equally important to work against those running for office who are against our causes and points of view.

It is important to know that voting locations for each election are selected by the entity putting on the election. This typically means that voting places move around, depending on who is putting on the election. There seems to be a perception on the part of voters that polling locations are or should be the same for any and all elections. This causes a great deal of discontent. It is important to explain voting location selection to voters if they ask.

Voter Registration

To vote in Texas a person must register with the voter registrar in the county in which the person lives. Unless the county government designates a different person, the county tax assessor-collector is the voter registrar. In some counties, the county clerk is the designated voter registrar, while some hire an election administrator.

Deputy Registrar

The voter registrar is authorized to deputize citizens to register voters. This practice allows the voter registrar to cover every section of the county more effectively. The voter registrar must deputize any bona fide resident of a county who wishes to register voters. The TDP encourages active Democrats to become deputy registrars.

Once sworn in, the deputy registrar cannot refuse to register a person on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, national origin, or political affiliation. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** When registering voters, a deputy registrar must NOT be attired in political clothing or regalia.

Although this process actually registers the voter, the application must then be forwarded to the voter registrar for the voter to be included in the county voting rolls.

How a Voter Registers

A person may apply in person or by mail. It is more effective to register people to vote in person and collect the voter registration information at the time, than to leave it up to them to mail in their registration cards. Therefore, it is highly recommended that anyone registering voters become a deputy registrar. When a voter registers with a deputy registrar, the voter is given a receipt. The receipt may be

used to vote, should the voter's registration card not be received in time and the voter meets the registration deadline.

Applicants must supply their complete names, residence addresses in the county, birth dates, places of birth, and last four (4) digits of their Social Security or Texas Drivers License numbers. Although the phone number is optional, people should be encouraged to provide that information so that they can be called if there is a problem with the application or the information is not clear.

For registration by mail, a business reply postcard-like envelope with postage paid by the state is available. Applications are available to individuals, organizations, businesses, and political subdivisions in reasonable numbers. No fee can be charged for voter application forms.

Students who are living away from home should be careful. Students are accustomed to filling in their permanent home addresses on forms; they should register under the address where they intend to vote. If they fill in their permanent home addresses and it is in another precinct or county, those are the locations where they will be registered and required to vote.

The husband, wife, father, mother, son, or daughter of a person entitled to register may fill out a card for that person.

A voter may register to vote at any time, but his or her application must be received by the voter registrar 30 days before an election in order to vote in that election. Mail-in registrations must be postmarked by the 30-day deadline; if the deadline falls on a weekend or a state or federal holiday, the postmark deadline is extended to the next regular workday.

Persons Eligible to Register to Vote

Persons eligible to register to vote must have the following characteristics:

- Be citizens of the United States
- Be at least 18 years of age on the day of the election
- Be residents of the county

Persons Not Eligible to Register to Vote

These people are not eligible to register to vote:

- Persons convicted of a felony who have not completed time served, parole and probation. Once a convicted felon is "off papers," however, he or she is eligible to vote and needs to register to vote again.
- Persons found to be mentally incompetent by a court of law.

Penalties and Fees

Any person giving false information to secure voter registration for himself or any other person is guilty of a third degree felony. There is no fee or poll tax for registering to vote.

Voter Registration Certificate

Within four weeks after the voter registrar receives the application, the voter should receive a voter registration certificate (card). The voter should notify the voter registrar, if he or she does not receive a voter registration card.

The voter should examine the certificate closely. If it is correct, the voter signs it and should carry it in his or her wallet. If the information is wrong, the voter should make corrections in the spaces provided and return it to the voter registrar.

Voter Registration Purge

In August of each election year, thousands of people are "purged" from the voter rolls. While the purpose of the purge is to remove the dead and former residents, this purge occasionally targets lower income, potential Democratic voters who have moved and have not re-registered. This is the reason continual voter registration is important in all potentially Democratic vote-rich areas. Democrats are opposed to targeted purging.

It is important that every precinct chair and county chair remain vigilant for voter purging in their precinct or county.

Nonpartisan Voter Registration Groups

In many areas of Texas, voter registration projects are conducted by nonpartisan, tax-exempt groups. These programs, while nonpartisan, are often targeted at populations that traditionally "under-vote." Many in the targeted communities are likely Democratic voters—if they will register and vote.

Nonpartisan voter registration groups have certain fundraising advantages over partisan groups: Donations to these groups may be tax-deductible for the giver, while contributions to political parties and candidates are not. Corporate and union funds can be contributed for this kind of voter registration activity, but not to a partisan election campaign.

Many of these groups also provide excellent training and resources for voter registration efforts. County parties and their officers, however, have to be careful not to coordinate directly with these organizations, or to give or raise money for their efforts. (This is a new restriction on parties in the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Reform Law.)

Voter Protection: Voter Bill of Rights of Texas

Voter Protection is an important issue and therefore it is necessary that voters know their rights. It is also important that we inform our volunteers who work at the polls, so that they can help assure all citizens are able to exercise their right to vote. The rights noted below are from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, as listed in the *Texas Election Code* found at www.lawyerscomm.org.

- If you are inside or are in line at your polling place any time between 7 AM and 7 PM on Election Day, you have the right to vote.
- You have the right to vote without presenting your voter registration certificate. If your name **is** on the voter registration roll you must do both of the following:
 - Sign an affidavit stating that you do not have your voter registration certificate with you
 - Present proof of identification
- If your name is **not** on the voter registration roll, you must do both of the following:
 - Sign an affidavit attesting to your eligibility to vote
 - Present proof of identification.
- If your name does not appear on the voter registration roll when you arrive at the polls, you have the right to vote a provisional ballot. However, you must cast your ballot in the correct precinct for it to count.
- If you make a mistake or "spoil" your paper ballot, you have the right to receive a "replacement ballot" and vote. You may receive a total of three replacement ballots.
- If you cannot read, do not speak English, or you are blind or otherwise physically disabled, you have the right to be assisted with voting. Assistance can be given by election officials or any other person except your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union. Any interpreter or translator must be a registered voter of your county.

- If you are physically unable to enter the polling place, you have a right to vote without entering the polling place upon request.
- If you have been convicted of a felony, but have served the full length of your criminal sentence, including parole, and have registered to vote since then, you have the right to vote.
- When you are within 100 feet of a polling place entrance (or you are inside the polling place or room), you have the right to wait to vote (or to vote) without anyone electioneering or trying to influence your vote in any other way.
- If you have moved within the same county, you have the right to vote at the polling place of your former residence, upon filling out a statement of residence.
- You have the right to take time off from work to vote, unless the polls are open for two consecutive hours outside of working hours.
- You have the right to bring a child under 18 years of age into the voting station with you.
- You have the right to receive non-English ballots, instructions, and other voting materials throughout the state.

Chapter 9 Straight-Ticket Voting In Texas

Straight-ticket voting is the term for voting along party lines. Straight-ticket voting is also referred to as straight-party voting. The trend over the past decade in straight-party voting has not been helpful to the Democratic Party.

Nationally, the 2004 presidential election was close. However, almost half (48%) of voters lived in “landslide counties,” where one candidate received more than 60% of the vote. In Texas a lot more than half (80%) of the counties were “landslide counties.”

In the 2002 General Election for governor, 224 of 254 (89%) Texas counties were “landslide counties.” In 1992 only 38% of all Americans lived in “landslide counties.” By 2000 the percentage had grown to 45%. By 2004 the post-WW II record was 48%. Americans and Texans are now clustered by political preference, not just for economic or ethnic or racial considerations. This has strong political implications in terms of how various areas are targeted for straight-ticket voting.

The table below shows the growth of straight-ticket voting in the last four election cycles.

Table of Straight-Ticket Voting Since 1998

Year	Voted Straight Ticket	Voted Straight Democratic	Voted Straight Republican
1998	48%	22%	25%
2000	49%	24%	25%
2002	50%	24%	26%
2004	58%	25%	32%

The sum of Democratic and Republican straight-party voting is less than total, because of rounding.

The growth of straight-ticket voting could mean the end of the idea that “all politics are local.” In 2004 almost 58% of all voters voted a party preference, most likely based on their national or statewide preferences. Local county races do not create straight-ticket voting. In fact, local races have been the reason historically for splitting the ballot between parties. In 2004, those local county considerations did not seem to matter to about 58% of the voters.

The major implication of Democrats managing only 44% of straight-ticket votes is that unless this situation changes, it will be nearly impossible for a Democrat to win a statewide office! Specifically, if 58% of the vote is party based and a Democrat gets only 44% of the straight-party vote, for a Democrat to win he or she must get 61% of the ticket splitters. Republicans can lose ticket splitters by less than 60-39 and still win. The chances of losing the straight-ticket vote by 12 percentage points and winning the ticket splitters by a landslide are almost nonexistent. If Democrats want to win again statewide, they must act to reverse this trend in straight-ticket voting.

The straight-party selection is typically located at the top of the ballot.

How to Generate More Straight-Ticket Democratic Votes

The grassroots level must stress the following:

- What Democrats stand for
- What Democrats have achieved
- What Democrats hope to achieve
- What Republicans have done and are doing to our nation and state

We have a statement of principles in the *TDP Rules* and a list of achievements in the Introduction. The Texas Democratic Party (TDP) should provide the details of what the GOP is doing in Texas. The evening news should give you this week's lie, arrogant act, or destructive proposal from Washington. Programs to stress straight-ticket Democratic voting in all our outreach and voter contact work are necessary, especially in strong Democratic areas. These programs can vary by local circumstances, but the following is an approach that has been tested and, as the data attached will show proven to work.

Model Straight-Ticket Program

Step 1: Target those areas that are 65%+ DPI or individuals that are consistent Democratic Primary voters or have been targeted as solid Democrats.

Step 2: During July and August, distribute material in person or by mail to the targeted areas and individuals emphasizing what the Democratic Party has done and what our candidates stand for. The candidates need to be in the material, but the emphasis needs to be the Democratic Party.

Step 3: During September, distribute in person or by mail slate material with whatever simple slogan that is appropriate telling people how and why to vote a straight Democratic ticket. Slogans should have meaning.

Examples of both good and bad slogans: "Vote 2 and You're Through," "Vote 1 and you are done," "Vote 2 and we'll all be blue," "Vote Democratic for a better Texas," "Vote Democratic for your children," or a series such as "Vote Democratic for better education," followed by "Vote Democratic for better health care," and "Vote Democratic for a safer America." Include a number, such as "Vote Democratic (2) for a better Texas," only if there is a number on the ballot. We should promote a positive Democratic message, not a number, such as 1 or 2.

Step 4: During the last critical month of the election cycle, and especially during early voting and Election Day, material should emphasize the slogan and a simple version of the message (i.e., Democrats Fight For Families, Democrats Work For Us, etc.) Then, for early voting and on Election Day you should be able to hand out material and put out signs with just "Vote Democratic (2) for a better Texas" or whatever the straight-ticket slogan is and be effective. Put a number on the sign only if there is a number printed on the ballot.

Timeline of Activities

Odd Numbered Year

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Party Building Activities (canvassing, get-togethers, fundraising, etc.- - - - - >											
Candidate Recruitment											
										Candidate sign-up	
Prepare for Primary											

Even Numbered Years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Primary - - - - - >											
Pct Convention											
Co./SD Convention											
Run-off (if necessary)											
Campaign activities go into full swing											
State Democratic Convention											
GOTV											

Chapter 10 Grassroots Activities

“Top Ten” Simple Things You Can Do

10. **CHANGE YOUR VOICE-MAIL GREETING.** Several people hear your voice on your answering machine at home or your cell phone voice-mail each day. When the election nears, update your voice-mail greeting with a reminder to vote for your local and statewide candidates and include early vote and election-day dates.
9. **TAKE YOUR CANDIDATES WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.** We meet people every day who need to hear about the Democratic Party and our agenda. We have materials to help. Pass out flyers in your neighborhood. Use talking points and issue papers to persuade friends and family. Give signs and placards to fellow supporters.
8. **RECRUIT MORE VOLUNTEERS.** Always keep your eyes open for individuals or groups willing to work for the Democratic cause. Keep lists current and be sure to contact volunteers often and keep them involved. Focus on young people; they are the future of our party.
7. **MONITOR THE MEDIA.** If you hear negative or inaccurate information on radio programs, do not hesitate to call in and provide an alternative viewpoint.
6. **MAKE A DONATION.** Any donation, large or small, to your state and area parties will help. Become a Texas Democratic Party Sustaining Member for only \$10 a month. Pass on the message to friends and family. *(Call TDP at 512-478-9800 for more information.)*
5. **MAKE THE WINNING CONTACT LISTS.** Candidates will always need help with local phone banks and canvass programs. Be sure area phone banks start early and that you have enough volunteers to knock on all the doors, so we have time to identify ALL supporters before the election.
4. **HELP DURING EARLY VOTE.** In Texas, we have a unique opportunity to get people out to vote for almost two full weeks. Focus on Early Vote. Early voting wins Democratic campaigns. Let's bank those votes early.
3. **REACH BEYOND.** We need to create relationships outside of our normal circles.
2. **TAKE ELECTION DAY OFF.** Actually, we want you to work on Election Day, but instead of going to your job, help lead the Democrats to victory. The pay is low and the day will be long, but it will all be worth it when we celebrate on election night.
1. **VOTE EARLY AND NEVER VOTE ALONE.** We all know several people who have to be reminded repeatedly to go vote. Make it a social occasion. Gather your friends and go vote early as a group, and then go out and have some fun. Early Vote is a perfect time for this, since everyone in your county can vote at any early voting location.

Getting Involved

There is nothing more important at the grassroots level than participation. No party or candidate has ever been successful without an army of grassroots volunteers. Whether a novice or veteran volunteer, there are a variety of ways to participate at all levels in a campaign as well as directly in the Democratic Party. Campaigns may be long and difficult, and as a volunteer you will be giving of your time and money. Be mindful not to overextend yourself time-wise or financially.

If you have more time than money, recruit new Democrats, volunteer your time, write letters to the editor, call in to a talk show, serve as a surrogate speaker, or organize a Democratic block meeting. If time is a

problem, maybe you could help with fundraising. Remember: The world is run by those who show up! Participate.

How to Participate

The activities listed represent some of the many ways one can participate.

Become a Precinct Chair: The precinct chair is the heart and soul of the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party and our candidates do not succeed without active precinct chairs. For instruction on how to become a precinct chair, please see Chapter 3.

Assist Your Precinct Chair: If the precinct chair is the heart and soul of the Democratic Party, then the grassroots volunteer is the heart and soul of a campaign. The duties and responsibilities of the precinct chair are listed in Chapter 3, but you can assist the precinct chair in writing letters, making phone calls, and canvassing your precinct. This helps volunteers learn about the local workings of the Democratic Party.

Show Your Colors: One of the easiest ways to participate is to have a Texas Democrat bumper sticker on your car. Let others know that you are proud to be a Democrat. Place Democratic candidate yard signs in your yard during elections. Let your neighbors know who's worth supporting.

Join Your County Party: There are many activities that occur on the county level, as the county chair is responsible for a multitude of duties. Assistance is always greatly appreciated. This is especially true during the primary and fall election cycles.

Join Local Democratic Clubs: In many places local Democratic clubs are very active and bring in speakers, hold events, participate in campaigns, open and operate campaign headquarters. This is an excellent method of meeting fellow Democrats and learning about the local workings of the Democratic Party. To expand your participation you may also wish to join nearby local clubs or statewide clubs, such as the Young Democrats or Texas Democratic Women.

Donate Your Time and Money: The political process requires both, and there is nothing more important than volunteering your time. Okay, money is important, too. If you can't give time, give money. If you can't give money, give of your time.

Work on a Campaign: There are many activities that fall into this category. To name a few, you can write letters for the candidate, make phone calls, block walk, deliver yard signs, or work in the campaign headquarters. As you become more comfortable with the process, you may even wish to organize phone banks, block walks, and events. Detailed lists of campaign activities are listed later in other chapters.

Work on Local Elections: Local elections are an excellent way to learn about your community. These elections include, but are not limited to, city, school board, MUD districts, and water boards. Under Texas law these are nonpartisan elections, but you do meet other activists and meet the local "players." One reason many city elections are not held in November of an election year is to keep the partisan and nonpartisan elections separate.

Write Letters to the Editor and Call in to Radio Shows: Let your voice be heard. If you are passionate about a specific subject, write letters to the editor of your local newspapers and call in to radio shows that solicit input.

Get on Democratic E-mail Distribution Lists: Many county Democratic Parties and Democratic clubs distribute useful information by e-mail. This is rapidly replacing regular mail notification because of its speed and low cost. This is an excellent means of keeping informed of the many activities occurring in your area. Caution: While chat rooms are popular, they may or may not be useful to a volunteer.

Join Non-Political Activist Groups: Membership in groups such as the League of Women Voters, Save Our Springs, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and others allow you to meet other active people in your community. In many cases these people will agree with your slant on politics and give you the opportunity to bring them into the fold.

Vote in the Democratic Primary: The only way to be officially identified as a Democrat is to vote in the Primary, because Texas does not have political party registration.

Vote a Straight Democratic Ticket in General Elections: You strengthen the Democratic Party locally, statewide, and nationally, when you vote a straight Democratic ticket.

The following are the rules for a ballot to be counted as a straight-ticket vote:

- If you have voted a straight-ticket and then you vote individually for up to two candidates, the ballot is still counted as a straight-ticket vote.
- If you have voted a straight-ticket and then you vote individually for more than two candidates, the ballot is not counted as a straight-ticket vote.

Voting individually for all of the Democrats on the ballot does not officially count as a straight-ticket vote.

Party Building and Campaign Activities

Party building and campaign activities are integrated processes, in that no one activity stands alone, but rather each supports the other. There are also several components, all of which are important. As an active Party officer or volunteer you should be involved in many of these activities.

As you become more comfortable with the process you may want to move up to become an activity coordinator. From being a coordinator you may wish to help run a campaign. Who knows, some day you may want to run for office. No matter where you fit in, you need to know the different components of a campaign.

Phone Banking

Phone banks provide a direct, relatively personal means of communication between the Democratic Party or a campaign and voters. Phone banks can be used for a variety of purposes:

- Identify voter attitudes toward the Party and its candidates (canvassing)
- Deliver a message to a select group of voters
- Invite voters to rallies, protests, and fundraisers
- Find yard sign locations and volunteers
- Get-Out-The-Vote during early voting and on Election Day
- Identify voter attitudes to separate undecided voters from those who support the Party or a candidate and only need some motivation and a reminder to ensure that their ballots are cast

Other methods are best for persuading voters.

Phone Bank Coordinator: The most important single factor in phone banking is having a capable phone bank coordinator. This will reduce confusion and duplication.

Setting Up a Phone Bank: Calls can be made from either a centralized phone bank where all the phones are under supervision or in a decentralized operation using volunteers who call from their homes.

- **Central Location:** The most efficient method of phone banking for calling a large number of people is utilizing a central location. You need to install phones at a headquarters or find phones already installed. Union halls or real estate, insurance, car dealerships, and law offices are locations that often have a number of phones and lines already installed. Callers need sufficient space for their telephone lists and report forms.
- **Home Calling:** Home calling is less desirable than centralized calling for calling a large number of people. Volunteers lose the fellowship of a headquarters and are more easily distracted. Someone must collect the information from the caller on a frequent, regular basis. However, with highly motivated volunteers this system can work well.

Targeting Calls: Target all the Democratic areas with one general phone message, or divide the area into logical groups (geographic, ethnic, DPI). Use a different phone message with each group. Decide who/where you'll be calling and for what purpose before you begin calling. Write different scripts for IDing versus encouraging people to go to the polls. Remember, phone banks are not good tools for persuasion and other methods of voter contact should be employed for that purpose.

Plan in Advance: Volunteers are easier to get if pre-selected dates and times are advertised. Canvassing/IDing should occur well in advance of early voting. Encouraging supporters to go to the polls (GOTV efforts) should occur immediately before and during early voting, through Election Day.

Caller ID: Today's technology allows for identifying incoming calls. Depending on the type of call, you may wish to block your ID. However, many people block unidentified calls.

Calling Times:

- For canvassing / IDing (to speak to a person.)

Mon – Thus	6 PM to 9 PM
Fri	Typically not a good day to call
Sat	10 AM to 8 PM
Sun	1 PM to 5 PM and 6 PM to 8 PM
Mon – Sat	To speak to senior citizens call 10 AM to 5 PM
- For Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) (or a message that can be left on a recorder)

Mon – Thus	9 AM to 9 PM
Fri	9 AM to 5 PM
Sat	10 AM to 8 PM
Sun	1 PM to 5 PM and 6 PM to 8 PM

Necessary Supplies:

- **Location:** Phone banking is best accomplished in a location that has several phone lines and sufficient space for telephone lists and report forms. Check union halls, real estate offices, insurance agencies, car dealerships, and law offices.
- **A List of Registered Voters with Voting History:** Voter registration lists may be obtained from your database manager, the county chair, the campaign, or by using the TDP on-line voter management system.
- **Precinct Maps:** Precinct maps may be obtained through the county clerk, election office, or the county engineer.
- **Phone Books and Criss-cross Directory for your Area:** Borrow criss-cross directories from local businesses, particularly insurance and real estate offices, or use a copy in the library.
- **Prepare Scripts for each Caller:** Sample scripts are available in Appendix G.
- **Print Notation Explanation Sheets for each Caller:** Codes for calling lists are helpful. Examples might be N/A for no answer; D for supporters; I for those claiming to be Independents; R for those against us; YS for the person wanting a yard sign, SL for send literature. Place a line through bad telephone numbers.

Block Walking

Block walking means going door-to-door and trying to speak to voters in each household. This is the single best method to persuade voters, to get information, to organize and build the Party, and to get

supporters to the polls. This door-to-door activity can be as simple an activity as covering a single precinct, as a precinct chair might do, or a supervised, targeted effort to reach as many voters as possible in a certain period. The downside of block walking is that it is the most labor-intensive method of voter contact, involving lots of hard work with little glamour.

Block walking should not be confused with literature drops (lit-drops) or door-hanging. In a block walk you knock on doors and speak to people, while lit-drops and door-hanging are used only to deliver material. Block walking is far more effective with a candidate, but it is also done without a candidate.

Block-Walk Coordinator: As with any campaign activity, it is helpful if one person is in charge to reduce confusion and duplication.

Targeting Your Area: A campaign must select where to expend its resources. Precincts with a high density of voting Democrats yield the best results. Precincts are typically listed with their Democratic Performance Index (DPI) in many available databases. DPIs are determined by previous election voting patterns. Precincts with a DPI of 65% or higher should be worked first, then the “swing precincts” with a DPI between 45% and 64%. Work precincts with a DPI below 45% only under special circumstances.

The impression any block walker makes at the voter’s door will last far longer than anything the block walker says. You are block walking to change or reinforce the voter’s attitude toward the Party and make citizens want to elect its candidates. People are friendlier, easier to approach, and more receptive if you are polite and dress neatly. Wear name tags to look more “official” and make the voter more comfortable. It’s also important for walkers to be familiar with any material they are distributing. **Be sure to wear comfortable shoes.** You may also wear a candidate’s t-shirts so that you are visible from a distance.

Necessary Supplies

- **A Block-walk List of Registered Voters:** Voter registration lists in a block-walk format (by street – split odd and even addresses) may be obtained from your database manager, the county chair, the campaign, or by using the TDP on-line voter management system.
- **Precinct Maps or Street Maps:** Precinct maps may be obtained through the county clerk, election office, or the county engineer.
- **Hand-out Material:** Campaign material and “sorry we missed you” cards should be provided.
- **Safety Equipment:** A cell phone with pre-programmed phone numbers, water, a snack, and a buddy make a safer walk.

Getting Ready to Walk

The following are steps to use in getting ready to walk.

- Map and sort walks by street. Obtain a map of the precinct (generally from the county clerk) and highlight the streets. Subdivide a large precinct into several “walks.”
- Create a walk package for neighborhoods. Take a 9x11 envelope and staple your map to it. If this is a small precinct then the map is OK. If it’s a large precinct, you must create two walk packages. On one map use a pink highlighter to section off one half of the precinct, and on the second package use a green highlighter. Two people walk one half and two walk the other. Place your survey form, script, literature, bumper stickers, voter registration forms, etc., inside the walk package. Use string and tape one end to a pen and the other to your packet so no one loses the writing instrument. Make sure to include a lapel sticker or button for identification, or provide the walkers with Democratic t-shirts.
- Walk with a partner who can log responses, tell you the names and voting history of a person without you having to manage a clipboard, list, pen, and push-cards/leaflets. Remember: You are trying to reach as many voters as possible.
- When you ring a doorbell, wait a little longer if the voter is elderly or if you see some indication that the voter may move slowly, for example, a wheelchair ramp to the house.

- Address a voter by name (“Mr. Smith?”). Voters will respond and warm up and are more inclined to be favorable.
- If no one is home, write a note in a bold, thick pen across the card. Something such as, “Ms. Smith, I look forward to visiting with you soon. - John.” You can write the message beforehand to save time on the street and just add the name at the door.
- Volunteers may need some training before they go block walking. Organize volunteers into teams of two, with one person walking the right side and one the left side of the street.

Basic Safety:

“Do’s and Don’ts” of Block Walking, Lit Drops, and Door-Hanging

Walkers should consider the following rules:

- Do not start on the next street until all walkers are ready. It’s not safe and splitting up does not help you cover the area faster.
- Beware of dogs, and don’t go into fenced and gated yards.
- Never go into a house, even if invited!
- Always carry a bottle of water and a snack.
- Never walk across people’s yards.
- Establish a time to meet back at the headquarters or central location.

Optimum Block Walking Times

Weekdays	4 PM-7 PM
Saturdays	10 AM-5 PM
Sundays	1 PM-7 PM

Literature Drops and Door-Hanging

Literature drops (lit-drops) and door-hangings are excellent methods to distribute material over a wide area. This activity can be as simple as covering a single precinct or an effort to reach as many voters as possible in multiple precincts in a certain period. Lit-drops can be accomplished on foot or by tossing the material from a vehicle. The disadvantage of block walking is that it is a labor-intensive method of voter contact.

Lit-drops and door-hangings should not be confused with block walking. Lit-drops and door-hanging are used only to deliver material, while block walking entails knocking on doors and speaking to people.

Coordinator: As with any campaign activity, it is helpful if one person is in charge to reduce confusion and duplication.

Targeting: A campaign must select where to expend its resources.

Be sure to wear comfortable shoes.

Necessary Supplies

- **Precinct maps or Street Maps:** Precinct maps may be obtained through the county clerk, election office, or the county engineer.
- **Material:** Campaign material, such as “sorry we missed you” cards, clipboards, lists, and pens must be supplied.
- **Safety Equipment:** A cell phone with pre-programmed phone numbers, water, a snack, and a buddy are necessary.

Getting Ready to Walk or Drive

- Map and sort walks/drive by streets. Obtain a map of the precinct (generally from the county clerk) and highlight the streets. Subdivide a large precinct into several “walks.” Mark streets covered using a highlighter.
- Walk with a co-worker for safety reasons. One person does the even side of the street and the other person the odd side. Wear a lapel sticker or button for identification, or wear Democratic t-shirts.
- Volunteers may need some training before they go walking/driving.

Basic Safety: “Do’s and Don’ts” of Lit-Drops and Door-hanging

- Do not start on the next street until both walkers are ready. It’s not safe and splitting up does not help you cover the area faster.
- Beware of dogs, and don’t go into fenced and gated yards.
- Always carry a bottle of water and a snack.
- Establish a time to meet back at the headquarters or central location.
- Do not go into anyone’s house, even if invited.
- Never walk across people’s yards.

U.S. Mailbox Reminder

Remember: It is against the LAW to place ANY material in or on a mailbox.

Canvassing

Canvassing is the term given to soliciting useful information. Precinct chairs use canvassing to identify Democrats and like-minded supporters in a precinct. Campaign canvassing seeks to find supporters over a significantly larger area. In rural or undeveloped areas, a phone canvass may be the most practical method to find supporters. There are two accepted methods of canvassing: going door-to-door and phoning.

The best way to canvass is by going door-to-door, but it requires more volunteers with transportation and a significant amount of time as compared with phoning. When canvassing door to door, try to update phone numbers, so phone lists and phone services can be used more effectively. (See Block Walking)

Phone canvassing is an excellent means of identifying supporters, especially when integrated into an overall voter contact program. It requires fewer volunteers, takes less time, and requires fewer resources than going door-to-door. However, less than 50% of voters can typically be reached by phone due to inaccurate lists, people moving, and phone number changes. (See Phone Banking)

Voter Registration Drives

Voter registration drives strengthen and expand the party's voting base and increase our candidates' chances of winning in November. Voter registration is best accomplished in Democratic high-density areas. It is necessary to target registration in highly Republican areas.

Locations: The best locations are those where you will find people that believe as we do. A few examples are stores, PTO meetings, houses of worship, neighborhood association meetings, unemployment offices, public access clinics, public events, high schools (senior events), sports events, and colleges (during registration).

Suggested Practices:

The setup must be nonpartisan and registrars must **not** be attired in political clothing or regalia.

- Always ask permission to set up your table.
- Dress appropriately for the area you are visiting.
- Volunteers should reflect the makeup of the community (ethnicity / language).

Placing Signs

Yard signs and large signs are an important part of any election. They provide important information to voters. Signs should be put out for the Primary and General Elections.

Locations: The best locations are high-traffic areas such as intersections or along busy streets and highways. Signs at business locations are also important. Finding locations should be accomplished during phone banking and canvassing, by asking elected officials, and by asking in person. Signs should also be placed at polling locations.

Ordinances: Know the local, municipal, and county regulations on sign size and location. Follow them!

Suggested Practices:

Remember these rules when placing signs:

- Always ask or have permission before erecting a sign.
- Keep track of the locations of placed signs.
- Never touch a sign of the opposition party or campaign.
- Dress appropriately for the work you are doing, including using gloves and wearing eye protection and sturdy footwear.
- Retrieve signs after the election.

Organized Activities and Events for Visibility

Events are an excellent way to show our colors, get like-minded people together, and have fun. Besides being fun, they can also be high-visibility activities. They can be casual or formal and for just a few people or a few hundred. The list of events is almost endless but here are a few of the more popular events: picnics at public parks, backyard barbecues, yard sales, art auctions, ice cream socials, carnivals, book sales, wine tasting parties, lunches, dinners, coffees, dog shows, and meet-the-candidate events. Some of these events are easier to do than others, and some require more help than others.

It is vital that the Democratic message be displayed far and wide. The number of possible activities and events one can participate in or organize is endless. Details on “how to” are listed in Appendix D.

The following are some of the possibilities for displaying the message:

- Democratic vehicle or float in a parade

- Democratic booth at fairs and community events
- Democratic hot dog picnics, ice cream socials, and backyard barbeques
- Democratic potluck dinners
- Democratic informal and formal dinners
- Rallies, protests, and town hall meetings

Event Responsibilities and Roles

Make sure one person at every event is responsible for identifying key participants and getting correct spellings, titles, and addresses. You are going to want to send thank-you notes to people who helped make the event possible and dignitaries who joined your event.

And at every event, someone must be prepared to record the names, e-mail addresses, and other information of people who want to volunteer or contribute. This list is valuable for future use.

Crowd-Building Techniques

Good crowd-building requires enthusiasm, tremendous organization, creativity, and hard work. Be sure to solicit additional suggestions about techniques that might be productive in a particular area or community.

The following sources of communication in their effectiveness depending upon location:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • Leafleting and posters | • Phone Banks |
| • Mass e-mailing | • Sound trucks |
| • Group invitations | • Radio talk shows |
| • Paid advertisements | • Phone banks |
| • Web pages | • Free media and public service announcements |

Crowd-Pleasing Ideas

The following activities can be used to enhance an event:

- Music
- Pre-programs
- Ticker tape, confetti
- Enthusiastic speakers
- Organized enthusiasm
- Loads of signs and flags everywhere
- A core group of people to interact with the crowd
- Local business involvement (food vendors, local radio stations)
- “Crowd toys,” e.g., beads, pennants, pom-poms, glow sticks, other spirit items

Chapter 11 Ongoing Activities

Success for the Democratic Party is winning elections. We must elect people who can make a positive difference in our communities and our nation and pass laws to protect our rights, create a more secure nation, and provide fair opportunity for everyone.

The key to this success is giving individuals a reason to join us at a grassroots level to turn out voters. Achieving this goal requires year-round coordination. It cannot be accomplished in only the 60 days before an election. Our year-round effort must involve our core constituencies first and then reach out to new constituencies and voters who share our fundamental commitment to our communities.

Create relationships

In Texas with its huge districts, even the best candidate cannot spend five minutes with each voter or shake everyone's hand. This is one reason that candidates are often seen as out of touch with the individual. We should work to provide opportunities for our candidates to meet people. Then it is our job to represent our candidates and shake the hands of the people in our communities.

Encourage activity and keep activists involved

Never wait until September of an election year and the traditional Labor Day campaign kick-off to start organizing. Volunteers should be kept active and interested throughout the year. This will raise awareness for the few months of the election cycle so that our organization is ready to go when the primaries are over.

Get and stay organized

We need to make a concerted effort to gather and distribute information. An effective flow of information provides a means to motivate precinct chairs and recruit new chairs.

Activity Suggestions

Activists and organizers should remain active throughout every year. Appendix D has suggestions for organizing activities. The following activities are very helpful to the Party and our candidates.

Parades and Community Events

- Send information about parades, festivals, neighborhood meetings, etc., to candidates and party affiliates, including local Democratic clubs
- Encourage people to host community-based activities (BBQs, coffees, parties, etc.)
- Send representatives to as many events as possible
- Show that we are active by participation
- Create a personal relationship between individual voters and the Democratic Party

Democratic Party Meetings and Functions

Activists, elected officials, and candidates will want to do the following things:

- Attend meetings of local Democratic clubs and organizations
- Find out their plans, especially for the fall election
- Create personal relationships

- Seek active support and volunteers
- Encourage personal growth by urging group members to participate in different functions

Labor Meetings/Functions

Labor has always been an important factor in the Democratic Party. These are among the ways Labor can help.

- Provide lists of all Central Labor Council meeting dates, times, and locations
- Have representatives attend as many events as possible
- Help create personal relationships between Labor and the candidates and workers
- Provide information about activities and encourage participation
- Provide information about candidates to members of Central Labor Council

Meet-and-Greets with NEW People

Reach out to new people all year with some of the following activities:

- Organize fish fries, BBQs, fiestas, etc.
- Invite Democrats in the area
- Mingle, talk to people one-on-one
- Make events fun—some of these events might also work as fundraisers

Help Build a Party Database

The following will help you build a party database that is difficult but important:

- Learn how to generate the files, lists, and labels you need
- Locate a “go-to” person for database questions and problems

Send Fundraising and Get-Involved Mailing

Use these mailing groups:

- Include identified supporters
- Reach the many people who would be willing to help, but may not have been reached by our previous fundraising and volunteer recruitment efforts

Create a Supporters List

Lists of voters and potential voters are extremely important, and the following techniques can help maximize their use:

- Group identified supporters by useful criteria (e.g., Hispanic, African American, female, lawyer, etc.) into as many groups as appropriate for each voter.
- Send update or issue-watch e-mails tailored for group interests, e.g., news of a Planned Parenthood endorsement to all women supporters. Updates keep our people abreast of what is happening and reach a more targeted audience than press releases. Supporters can also easily share this information with friends, colleagues, and family, helping us to reach a wider audience with a more personal touch.
- Assume that all mailed and e-mailed information will fall into Republican hands. Don’t send anything you wouldn’t mind seeing on the front page of your newspaper.

Create an Issues Section on the Website

The following will help you create a better website:

- Work with a talented volunteer or professional to create or update your website if you don't have one for your county party or yours was designed more than two years ago
- Include a reference to your website on printed literature about your County Party
- Post new information at least twice a week
- Create a section where people can choose which issues matter to them and submit their e-mail addresses. Include local or area issues as possible choices.
- E-mail the people who have chosen a certain issue whenever the party does something related to the issue. The e-mail addresses can also be used for general information about events and campaign activities.
- Check the website and respond regularly

Sign-Up Program

- Challenge supporters to sign up ten people to be on the e-mail update list
- Mail a bumper sticker to everyone who signs up
- Reward our supporters who meet the challenge (even if it's only a thank-you e-mail)

E-Newsletter

- Update supporters monthly or weekly about events, happenings on the campaign trail, news they might have missed
- Include issues section, especially if you don't have time or people to do targeted e-mails to different groups

Block Meetings

- A block meeting at your home is one of the most direct ways to recruit and organize Democratic voters in your precinct
- Block meetings are an excellent venue for introducing local elected officials and candidates to neighbors. Persuade the official or candidate to make a short presentation.

Democratic Clubs and Organizations

There are hundreds of Democratic clubs and organizations across Texas, each with its own focus. The memberships of these clubs and organizations should be encouraged to be active in party building activities throughout the year.

Chapter 12 The Integrated Campaign

The purpose of an integrated campaign is to turn out votes for our candidates. In the state and county-integrated campaigns, basic organizational tasks—such as voter registration, voter identification, early voting and voting by mail programs, and other get-out-the-vote activities—are conducted to benefit the entire Democratic ticket.

By working together, our candidates, state and local party organizations can avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and reach more voters for less money. It makes sense to save time, money, and effort rather than having each candidate develop separate programs. By pooling these activities, our candidates have more resources to target persuasive messages at "swing" or "independent" voters.

Cities and counties across Texas vary dramatically, requiring the details of each local campaign effort to adapt to the size, demographics, and political history of the community. Local politics are best controlled locally.

The Integrated Campaign Steering Committee

The goal of a steering committee is to integrate all General Election activities in a way that involves local Democrats in a united effort and uses our "people resources" to turn out Democratic voters. The integrated campaign is an opportunity to strengthen the local party, not an attempt to go around it.

The size and responsibilities of the County Executive Committee (CEC) steering committee should depend on the size and political makeup of the county. In smaller counties, or where the CEC is inactive, the county chair should consider forming a steering committee to draft a campaign plan for the county.

An integrated campaign steering committee is not intended to usurp the authority of the official party apparatus. Rather, it is designed to serve as the General Election planning and organizing team.

The county chair should call a preliminary meeting of the steering committee early in the election cycle. A plan for the General Election must be in place, and you should be ready to begin as soon as the primaries are over and our nominees are known.

Including representatives from all Democratic groups will increase the chance for success. This should include, but is not limited to, the following people:

- Officeholders and candidates
- Precinct chairs
- SDEC members
- Democratic club presidents
- Local coordinators for statewide and district candidates
- Business and community leaders
- Minority community leaders
- Young Democrats and other youth groups
- Religious leaders
- Representatives from constituency groups (farmers, teachers, labor, environmental, etc.)

Specific issues may also bring new people who would not normally join our grassroots organizations.

Supporting Candidates

Candidates rely heavily on local support. With a good integrated effort in place, the candidates' local coordinators will be able to call on the party organization to build crowds, help with local media, or generate opportunities for endorsement or fundraising with key local people.

Integration among Campaigns

Integration among campaigns is going to be your key to a non-duplicative effort by the various candidates and their campaigns in November.

Statewide and regional candidates will probably ask to be included in the integrated campaign. It is important that the candidate or representative meet early in the campaign cycle with the CEC and county chair and then with the candidate coordinator. In many cases, the candidate's campaign will provide financial or staffing assistance.

Each candidate's campaign must believe and trust that the other campaigns will do what they agreed to do. That kind of trust comes only as a result of regular, on-going communications established early in the campaign season.

Campaign Planning

The key to a successful campaign is a good plan with timelines and a budget. Set priorities and develop options that account for different levels of resources and support. You don't have a plan until you put it in writing, and you don't have a campaign until you have a plan. Before then it is just an idea. A written campaign plan makes it easy to incorporate new ideas and proposals.

A good plan should have the following elements:

- A delineation of what will be done, how much it will cost, how it is funded, and who is responsible for getting it done.
- A long-range look at what you want to accomplish and a determination of what steps are necessary to accomplish those goals.
- A realistic projection of the resources that will be available during the campaign and a determination of how to use those resources.

Allow for the following requirements:

- Flexibility to allow for the changes that occur during a campaign must be included. Recognize that the plan is not written in stone. However, a plan must be specific in order to get things done. Specific timelines are important to keep the campaign on track.
- Integration of the campaign activities within your county with an effective and efficient plan will help everyone. Candidates will be more likely to provide resources for local activities if they know there is a good plan to use those resources.
- Identification of when and where you will need volunteers must be in the plan so they can be notified in advance and plan their time accordingly. People who volunteer are very valuable resources. Having a schedule and plan for volunteer work will get more accomplished and will help volunteers feel that they are part of the "big picture."

A good integrated plan also allows for these elements:

- A volunteer pool ready and available
- Good relationships with local officeholders
- Friendly and professional local press contacts
- Locations of good, relevant "photo op" sites

Types of Voter Contact Activity

As you work through your plan, use the following chart for ideas about how best to allocate your resources for the greatest impact.

Type	Impact	Ability to Target	Cost	Resources Needed
Lit Drop	Low	Little	Low	People, Time
Leafleting	Low	Little	Low	People
Yard Signs	High	Great	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Mailed Newsletters	High	Great	High	People, Time, Money
Billboards	Low	Little	High	Money
Street Signs	Low	Little	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Block Walking	High	Great	Low	People, Time
Candidate (in person)	High	Great	Low	Time, Money
Coffees	High	Great	Low	Time, Money
Town Meeting	High	Some	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Shopping Centers	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Street Tours	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Existing Events	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Created Events	High	Great	High	People, Time, Money
Rallies	High	Some	High	People, Time, Money
Precinct Captains	High	Great	Low	People, Time
Phones	High	Great	Moderate	People, Time, Money
TV	High	Some	High	Money
Radio	High	Some	High	Money
Direct Mail	High	Great	High	People, Time, Money

Elements of a Successful Campaign

Precinct Canvassing

Every precinct must be canvassed early in the General Election cycle to identify our voters and those that will vote our way. If not accomplished before the campaign headquarters opens, this should be one of the first activities undertaken.

Voter Registration

Voter registration should be stepped up as the General Election cycle begins. It should take place in high DPI areas and other places where our voters can be found.

Voter Outreach / Education

Many voters stay home if they feel they do not know the candidates or issues. It is important to reach out and educate voters on the issues and candidates. There are multiple methods of accomplishing these

activities, many of then listed in the Type of Activities section. In all, the message must be clear, to the point, and uniform. The frequency should increase throughout the General Election cycle.

Campaign Headquarters

Campaign headquarters are absolutely essential. They provide exposure to the Party and our candidates, are an excellent gathering place, make it easy for people to volunteer, and encourage our people to become active. Campaign headquarters require money, supplies, and people.

Campaign headquarters should open no later than mid-September or earlier if funding allows. They should remain open as many hours as money and staffing allow. Headquarters should remain open at least a week or two after the election to allow for an orderly shutdown of the campaign and the collection and storage of equipment, furniture, supplies, and signs.

Securing a Location: This task should be assigned to one person or a small group. The contract should include (1) who is responsible for what and (2) related costs (rent, utilities, insurance). Ensure the location is insured before opening. Procure necessary permits. Have a storefront sign or banner made and hung. Make sure you check municipal requirements.

The location should have the following characteristics:

- High visibility
- Easy access and ample parking
- Adequate security and parking lot lighting
- Adequate utilities: bathroom(s), air-conditioning/heating, electrical service, lighting, phone lines, Internet access, and storage area
- Inviting appearance

Office Operations Operating a headquarters is a complex undertaking.

It is highly desirable to have one person, a headquarters manager, in charge and responsible for its operation.

Coordinators should be enlisted to oversee specific tasks. This ensures each task is accomplished in a uniform and timely manner. Coordinators should use the headquarters as soon as it opens.

A few of the coordinator positions are as follows:

- Volunteer (scheduling, recruiting, recognition) coordinator
- Phone bank coordinator
- Block walking coordinator
- Sign placement and retrieval coordinator
- Candidate coordinator
- Sale items (pins, bumper stickers, flags, jewelry, etc.) coordinator

Events and Publicity There should be at least one grand opening (there may be more) to publicize the headquarters and recruit volunteers. News releases should be distributed for this and all other activities at the headquarters. Local clubs, elected officials, and candidates should be notified of all activities.

Candidates should be invited to speak. Every activity should be publicized as widely as possible.

The more people that show up the more volunteers you will get. Success breeds success.

Activities should occur throughout the General Election cycle.

Supplies The list of necessary supplies is almost endless. The more essential supplies are as follows:

- Tables, desks, and chairs
- Photocopier
- Computers and printers (several)
- Phones (several) and fax machine
- Answering machine
- File cabinets and shelving
- Office supplies (note pads, paper, scissors, pens, pencils, makers, pins, thumb-tacks, maps, calendars)
- Bulletin boards and message boards
- Radio, TV, DVD player, VCR
- Block walking lists
- Phone banking lists
- Fire extinguisher and first aid kit
- Refrigerator and microwave
- Phone books and criss-cross lists
- U.S. and Texas flags
- Decorations
- Bathroom and cleaning supplies
- Donation jar and money box

Block Walking, Phone Banking, etc.

Headquarters should coordinate block walking, phone banking, literature dropping, door-hanging, and other activities. Each activity requires teams of people. The pace should quicken as early voting nears as with all campaign activities.

Sign Placement and Retrieval

Signs are important, especially in swing precincts and for local and down ballot races where name I.D. is low and the use of mass media is impractical.

In swing precincts, yard signs (not polling place signs) create recognition and acceptance in the community: “Candidate X must be OK if our neighbors have her signs up.” A sign in a neighbor’s yard may get an independent or undecided voter to watch an ad or read one of the hundred pieces of persuasion mail that hits the mailbox right before the election. In GOTV precincts, signs are more important in generating turnout during the early voting period or near Election Day.

If precinct canvassing was not accomplished prior to the opening of the headquarters, the canvassing should include sign request inquiry. If precinct canvassing is complete, phone bank to our people for yard signs. This is a good time to promote the headquarters and seek volunteers. Someone should be willing to deliver signs.

A sufficient number of yard signs should be set aside for early voting and Election Day polling locations. Teams should be assigned to place the signs and, just as importantly, retrieve them after the polls close. Finding locations for large signs is important. **Never** place signs in a right-of-way.

Record where signs are placed. Teams should be assigned to place the signs and, just as importantly, retrieve them after the polls close.

The headquarters should maintain supplies for erecting signs including posts, a post driver, gloves, eye protection, and quick-ties.

It is helpful if the candidates coordinate the type of stakes that are used to support the signs. Cheap signs don’t save money if someone must drive 200 miles to get the only stakes that will support the signs, or if the signs disintegrated the first time it rains.

Get-Out-the-Vote

Get-Out-The-Vote, commonly called GOTV, is a specialized turn-out-the-vote program that typically targets high DPI precincts from early voting through Election Day. GOTV is a keystone in the campaign plan. It gets its own (next) chapter because of its importance.

Securing and Training Election Officials

Securing and training election judges, alternates, and clerks is the responsibility of the entity putting on the election. The county chair and CEC are heavily involved in the Primary process. The Party typically assists the county clerk or the responsible officer in finding and training judges, alternates, and clerks for both the Primary and General Election.

A small team should be assigned the task of filling these positions. The team should be given at least two months to complete their task.

Securing Statutory Committee and Board Members

The Party will be asked to provide members to several statutory election committees and boards, such as the signature verification committee and early ballot board. In most cases, persons from each Party sit on the committee or board, which have their own statutory duties as defined by the *Texas Election Code*. Volunteers for these positions should not only know the law as it pertains to their assignment, but should be strong, persuasive, and able to stand their ground in the face of opposition to ensure the law is followed and the rights of the voters are protected.

Voter Turnout Data Retrieval and DRTs

On Election Day, it is critical to know and follow voter turnout trends, especially for precinct chairs, campaign coordinators, and GOTV coordinators.

The data allows precinct chairs to keep abreast of their precinct and get their voters to the polls. It allows campaign and GOTV coordinators to target their efforts and move their teams and shift phone bank priorities to precincts performing below expectations.

State law requires that voter turnout totals be posted by the election judge or alternate election judge on polling place doors every two hours from 9:30 AM until 5:30 PM.

A total for each voting location should be turned in to the headquarters or other centralized location as soon as it is posted. The task of retrieving the data should be assigned to either a person working outside the polling location or by data retrieval team (DRT) member that drives around and retrieves the data.

Mail-In Ballots

Voting by mail is an important part of the campaign plan. Texas law sets eligibility and deadlines. The mail-in ballot program is an essential part of the GOTV program.

Early Voting

Early voting allows a convenient opportunity to vote before Election Day. Every Democrat should take advantage of early voting and encourage others to do so, as well. The more people that early vote, the more people that are available to volunteer.

Texas law allows for early voting from 17 days to 4 days before any public election. Days and hours vary by county.

Every campaign should have an early voting plan in place and ready to go before early voting begins. For additional information, see the GOTV program.

Election Day Operations

It is imperative to have a detailed plan and volunteers available to execute the plan as Election Day activities are many and varied.

The day begins very early with the placement of signs at polling locations. Teams should be deployed late the night before or early enough to have all of the signs placed by 6:45 AM.

Volunteers assigned to work every polling location should show up no later than 7 AM. They should have sufficient material to cover their shift. They should also have food and drink, or it should be routinely delivered.

Data retrieval teams and the coordinators receiving the data should be ready to go for the 9:30 AM posting.

Phone banks and block walking should be in full swing throughout the day targeting mainly high DPI precincts.

Voting rallies should be conducted, near polling locations when possible, in high DPI precincts.

Precinct chairs should be working their precincts.

GOTV activities should be in overdrive.

Campaign Closure and Volunteer Appreciation

The last part of the campaign plan must include closing the campaign headquarters and in some way showing appreciation to all of the volunteers.

Before Election Day, ensure there is a team prepared for the following activities:

- Celebrate with an after-the-election volunteer appreciation event. Everyone from the top of the ticket to the one-time volunteer must be invited, along with our elected officials.
- Store or return the furniture and supplies.
- Clean headquarters to satisfy the lease contract.
- Close out and pay final bills for utilities.

Chapter 13 Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

Put It All Together

When the Democratic Party has a strong GOTV effort, we have a much better chance of winning. Many elections are decided by only a few votes per precinct. GOTV is the culmination of the long days and nights of campaigning. It is the busiest time of any campaign, and it is critical to our success. There is one deadline: the closing of the polls on Election Day. That deadline will not change. There are no time-outs. GOTV techniques must be applied during both early voting and on Election Day. Goals must be made and met.

The objective of GOTV is to get more of our voters to the polls than the opposition. Every supporter you have identified must be reminded over and over again to vote. On Election Day, your volunteers cannot be allowed to sit at home or hang out at headquarters. Especially in non-presidential years and special elections, our candidates win or lose as a result of the GOTV effort.

To use your assets—time, money, and people—where they will do the most for the GOTV effort, you must have a planned GOTV strategy. You will never have enough resources, so the resources you do have must be allocated to maximize their impact.

During the mayhem of the closing days of the campaign, you will not have time to take a break, sit down, and develop a thoughtful, effective plan. Develop a plan early through your integrated campaign steering committee and refine it as the campaign season progresses. Ultimately, every campaign program must be designed and executed with GOTV in mind.

Appoint a GOTV Coordinator

The GOTV coordinator, the head of the GOTV team, should be established early in the election cycle and work closely with the CEC and county chair. The GOTV coordinator is responsible for the GOTV effort and must be a strong motivator, an excellent organizer, and have a persuasive, outgoing personality.

The job requires a great deal of time and dedication. It is extremely important that the GOTV coordinator have a thorough understanding of the GOTV precincts and excellent relationships with community leaders in GOTV areas.

The CEC integrated campaign steering committee should participate in the selection of the GOTV Coordinator.

Operation Communication among Campaigns

Every candidate needs to participate in the GOTV effort, on their own or as a part of the integrated campaign. Each campaign must have access to and confidence in the GOTV coordinator. Each candidate's campaign must believe and trust that the other campaigns will do what they agreed to do. That kind of trust comes only as a result of regular, on-going communications established early in the campaign season.

Target Precincts and Voters

Precinct targeting, done by analyzing past election returns, tells you where and how to use your resources. In areas with very high past Democratic support (65% or higher Democratic Performance Index, DPI), for example, it is not necessary to I.D. voter preference before GOTV. In marginal or "swing" precincts (45-65% DPI), however, you will want to contact only those registered voters whom you have identified as Democrats through canvassing.

GOTV Target Precincts

Precincts with low turnout but a high tendency to vote Democratic (65%+ DPI), are the first priority for GOTV. Be cautious, however, in ranking your precincts. A few precincts (usually, the very poorest) may have a turnout that is chronically so low that it cannot be raised effectively through normal GOTV. In such precincts, innovative, high-profile programs are necessary. Generally, though, all 65%+ Democratic precincts should be targeted.

Marginal “Swing” Precincts

"Swing" precincts (45-65% DPI) are the second priority for GOTV efforts. Swing precincts are usually most effectively reached through a phone bank operation.

Swing precincts must be phoned early in the election cycle to identify Democratic, Republican and undecided voters. This allows time to target voter persuasion mail and other activities aimed at “swinging” voters to our side. Early I.D. calling will also allow all phones to be available for GOTV near Election Day.

Group GOTV Targeted Precincts and Voters

The GOTV team should sort targeted precincts and voters geographically. This allows an efficient allocation of resources.

Build Block Walking and Phone Banking Teams

GOTV block walkers and phone bank teams are critical. The GOTV coordinators must gather as many volunteers as possible for these activities. Volunteers should be a reflection of the GOTV precincts where they will be working. GOTV block walking operation is described more fully at the end of this chapter.

Knock and Take Block Walking

Specialized block walking teams should be formed to participate in Knock and Take block walking. These teams literally must be prepared to knock on doors in targeted precincts and take people to the polls.

Early Voting Strategy

An early voting program is extremely important as it can win or lose the election. There are two different but equally important types of early voting: (1) early in-person voting, especially during extended voting hours on weekends and the last week of the early voting period, and (2) early voting by mail.

Early Voting In Person: The Long Election Day

A major problem with in-person early voting in many counties is that early voting polls are open hours such as 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, making it difficult for working people to vote early.

Under our early voting law, in counties of 100,000 or more population, all early voting polls, including branch polling places, must remain open for twelve hours on the last Saturday of early voting, five hours on the last Sunday, and twelve hours each weekday of the last week. In smaller counties, similar hours can be achieved by petition of 15 registered voters.

In counties under 100,000, you must secure signatures of 15 registered voters on a petition and submit it to the county clerk in order to require extended hours for your county. The signatures must be submitted prior to these dates:

- For the Primary Election, the 5th day before the first day of early voting for that election

- For the General Election, the 5th day before the first day of early voting for that election

Note: Small, rural counties that do not need seven days of extended hours may still be petitioned to open the early voting box on one designated Saturday or Sunday. In these counties, be flexible and work with local officials to design programs that save money and still make the polling places available to the people.

Early Voting and Your GOTV Plan

Your GOTV plan should take into account the following in regard to early in-person voting:

- If you petition for early vote, make sure you have a program and use the program to turn out votes. Otherwise, you'll make enemies in the courthouse.
- Secure favorable early vote polling place locations, especially commercial or mobile voting locations and branch locations, by working with the county commissioners' court, county clerk, and election officials.
- The designated hours for early polling place should be set favorably. Block walk, mail, and phone bank messages should encourage Democrats to vote during the early voting period. Use Election Day techniques to encourage voting the weekend of extended hours.
- Rallies should be planned for the last Saturday of the early voting period where participants can be encouraged to go to a nearby polling place to vote early.
- Houses of worship should be worked to encourage voters to vote early during the mandatory hours on Saturday and Sunday.
- Develop workplace programs with unions. Flyers can be used to encourage workers at Democratic businesses to vote early at nearby polling places.
- Volunteers and their families should be encouraged to vote early. That makes more time to work on GOTV on Election Day!

The Early Vote Plan

Commercial Early Vote Locations

The program to "take the polls to the voters" is to establish early voting polls at commercial locations and other shopping center sites where there is a high volume of foot traffic. This is one of the most successful aspects of the early voting effort.

Studies of early vote turnout show that the commercial locations experience much higher voter participation. By starting early and working with local officials and business leaders, locating and establishing polls in commercial areas frequented by likely Democratic voters can become a civic "good government" project.

Mobile Early Voting Polls

Counties can now establish mobile polls. This is clearly allowed by early voting law. Under this concept, you could literally have a station wagon or bookmobile-type polling place that moves around the county to convenient locations.

Such mobile voting locations should be well publicized and coordinated with specific events and GOTV projects aimed at bringing people out to vote on the days and hours a voting location will be in their community. A rally at a park near the early voting location is an example of how to get folks to a convenient poll location.

Voting by Mail-In Ballot

Disclaimer: Before beginning a mail-in ballot program, be sure you fully understand the law. If you have any questions, call the TDP for guidance.

The purpose of each element of a GOTV campaign is to turn out the voters who can be counted upon, if sufficiently motivated to vote, to cast their ballots for Democratic candidates. Rather than use a shotgun approach to turn out large numbers of voters we *hope* will vote Democratic, we are more effective when we aim our sights toward those we *know* will vote Democratic.

Democrats have traditionally run successful mail programs targeting senior citizens: the 65-and-over population in Democratic precincts and retirement or nursing homes and those identified through phone banks.

There are things you can do to support these mail programs locally:

- Send your voter persuasion literature immediately to those voters who are getting mail-in ballots. Your job is to persuade them by the time they vote and make sure they vote. Have your literature or phones ready in advance, so you can implement this program in a timely manner.
- Mail-in ballots must be received by Election Day. Call those targeted voters and remind them to mail in their ballots.
- **Remember these two very important laws.**
 - **You cannot have an open mail-in ballot envelope in your possession.**
 - **You cannot assist the voter in filling out the ballot.**

Always refer to Chapter 86 of the Texas Election Code if you have any questions.

Local Mail-In Ballot Campaign

Voting by mail is somewhat complicated process requiring voters to understand and complete several procedures. Each procedure must be done properly and in a timely fashion for the voter to have a valid ballot.

Who Can Vote by Mail?

The categories of voters who may vote by mail are: (1) military personnel, (2) people who will be away from their home precinct during the voting period, (3) disabled persons, and (4) people 65 years of age and older. The voters we typically focus on are people who are 65 years of age or older.

Targeting Mail-in Ballot Voters

Focus the effort on the predominately Democratic areas known as the get-out-the-vote (GOTV) precincts or neighborhoods.

Getting Started

The first step is to choose a Mail-In Ballot Committee chair. This chair then chooses committee members. Committee members should carry blank ballot applications and stamps.

Choosing the Mail-in Ballot Committee Chair

The chair of the Mail-In Ballot Committee must be a diligent person who has good organizational skills, is willing to conduct this important task, and will follow it through to completion. In some counties, there may be two or more committees to work different towns or areas.

Timeline

Mail-in ballot applications may be received by the election administrator starting 60 days before the election. The mail-in ballot application must be designed and printed and ready for mailing 75 days prior to the election. The application **must meet specific requirements**. Therefore, it is critically important to work with the election administrator to ensure its correctness. Address labels should also be available 75 days before the election. The applications should be labeled and mailed between 75 and 65 days before the election. Phone banking to the eligible voters begins 10 days after the applications are mailed.

The Daily Routine

The Mail-In Ballot Committee, using developed lists, begins calling the voters who were mailed applications about 10 days after the committee mailed the applications. The voter should be asked if they received their applications, and, if not, asked if they would like one. If they have not received their application and want one, mail another application immediately. When all of the voters have been called once, begin the process of calling everyone that was re-mailed an application.

Basic Procedure for Mail-In Balloting

Everyone on the committee should understand the mail-in ballot procedure.

The following steps are necessary to vote legally by mail-in ballot.

1. The voter must use a ballot application to request a ballot. Committee members should carry blank ballot applications and stamps. Ballot applications are frequently sent by the Party to voters over 65.
2. The voter fills out the application or a second party may fill out the application **except the signature**. The voter must sign the application or make a mark. If the application is filled out by a second party, the second party must fill out and sign the assistant/witness statement. If the voter makes a mark, it must be witnessed and the witness must fill out and sign the assistant/witness statement. (There are strict rules on assisting voters. Read and understand Chapter 86 of the Texas Election Code before assisting voters).
3. The ballot application must be mailed or taken to the elections administrator. It must be received between 60 and 7 days before the election.
4. The elections administrator will mail a ballot and two envelopes to the mail-in voter.
5. The voter or a second party must fill out the ballot. Assistance can be given by election officials or any other person except your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union. Any interpreter or translator must be a registered voter of your county. If an assistant is used, the assistant must fill out and sign the assistant/witness statement. The ballot must be signed by the voter or the voter must make a mark. If the voter makes a mark, it must be witnessed and the witness must fill out and sign the assistant/witness statement. (There are strict rules on assisting voters. Read and understand Chapter 86 of the Texas Election Code before assisting voters).
6. The ballot is put in the “ballot envelope” which does not need to be signed.
7. The “ballot envelope” is put the “carrier envelope.”
8. The “carrier envelope” is then sealed.
9. **The “carrier envelope” is then signed by the voter or the voter makes a mark.** This signature must “match” the signature on the ballot application in step 3. If the voter makes a mark, the witness must also sign the envelope.
10. The signed “carrier envelope” containing the ballot in the “ballot envelope” must be returned to the elections administrator.

If mail-in ballot is not mailed in, the voter may opt to vote in person, by returning the mail-in ballot to the election judge.

What Happens with Applications and Ballots on Election Day?

Early voting is considered a separate precinct in the county. Therefore, an early voting judge and early voting ballot board (clerks) are appointed by the county commissioners. Both political parties submit representatives' names. That board receives the ballot applications and the mail-in ballots that have been received at the courthouse.

In determining whether a mail-in ballot is valid, the board matches the signature on the ballot application with the signature on the outer envelope in which the ballot is mailed. The inner envelope holding the ballot (the ballot envelope) is not signed. The outer envelope, however, must be signed after it is sealed. THE SIGNATURE OR MARK ON THE OUTER ENVELOPE MUST "MATCH" THE SIGNATURE ON THE BALLOT APPLICATION OR THE BALLOT WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

Most judges and clerks know that a person's signature will vary. Certain characteristics, however, are good indications that the same person has executed both signatures. For instance, a person will usually make the same capital letter similarly each time.

Mail-in Ballots Make a Difference!

There is probably not another single GOTV effort that will make a bigger difference in the outcome of elections than the mail-in ballot campaign. You will not have to guess whether or not all the work paid off. You will know when the early votes are counted that you and the committee have made a significant contribution to the Party.

Working with Campaigns

From the beginning, work with local Democratic clubs, local elected officials, and all campaigns in your area, including state and local campaigns.

Some campaigns will be mailing, phoning, walking, and running special radio or TV ads in the area. Hopefully, the messages are similar and the timing of your efforts will complement theirs, but candidates often have a message that works in swing precincts, but does not motivate the hard-core Democrat or minorities. This is where the slate materials and straight-ticket message discussed previously come into play.

Avoid coordination with federal candidates as this violates new laws.

Access and Allocate Resources

Resources of money, people, and time must be assessed constantly throughout the GOTV effort. Rarely is there enough of anything. Resources must be re-allocated as necessary, but avoid miscommunication.

A major assessment must be made at the conclusion of early voting. Check the effectiveness of the GOTV efforts and plan Election Day accordingly.

Election Day

Every tool in the toolbox must be in play on Election Day. Phone banking and block walking should run from early morning through 6:30 PM, while knock and drag should run until 6:45 PM. Permits may be required and times may be set by local entities for sound trucks. Polling locations must be fully staffed all day. Material, food, and drink must be delivered. Data retrieval teams (DRTs) must report to the headquarters for the GOTV effort. Rallies must be set up and operated.

The headquarters must be fully staffed and have plenty of food and drink. As the polls close, turn the work party into a real party.

Checklist: GOTV Components

Vote by Mail

- Do we have mail out mail-in ballot applications that can be mailed in a timely fashion?
- Do we have enough callers to follow up once the applications are mailed?
- Do we have people in place at the courthouses to make sure that those votes do not get thrown out?

Drivers

- Do we have enough drivers for early voting (EV) and Election Day (E-Day)?
- Do we have enough forms of transportation?
- Are we going to have “Sound Cars” and if so, where is the equipment coming from?

Walkers

- Do we have enough people and materials for block walks?
- Do we have enough water and snacks?

List Checkers

- Do we have a system to make sure that we cross voters off our contact lists after they have voted?

DRTs

- Have we set up training for the Campaigns to be able to follow the voting on E-day to see where we need the most work throughout the day?

Callers

- Do we have enough phones and people to be able to phone bank?
- Do they have phone lists?
- Do we have enough locations (law offices, campaign HQs, and boiler rooms?)

Protection

- Have we gotten enough people together that know how to protect voters at the polls and then to protect their votes?
- Does every county know whom they should call, if voter intimidation is reported?
- Do we have lawyers on stand by to help ensure the safety of voter's rights?
- Do we have phone numbers that go directly to the county and state officials, if we detect voter fraud and intimidation?

GOTV Block Walking

This section covers the mechanics of door-to-door block walks in precincts that are 65% or more Democratic. This kind of block walk is used in the General Election.

In counties with a permanent Party Block Captain Program in place, the block captain, walkers, and drivers would all be in place in the targeted precincts. The Block Captain Program is the best of all possible worlds, but it is hard to create and even harder to maintain. Whether or not your county party has a Block Captain Program, you should organize the following Block Walk Program in the core (65% or higher) precincts.

The Block Walk Program is designed to be a paid program. However, once you have planned a Block Walk Program for all the core precincts, you can scale back your efforts to match the resources available. You may be able to use well-trained volunteers in some precincts. You may choose to eliminate some doors (households) or precincts or cut the number of walks to match the resources you have available.

Cover a smaller area very well instead of a large area poorly. Go to every door, other than Republicans. Don't worry about voter history. In the core precincts the vast majority of the people not voting would be Democrats if they voted. Play the percentages.

Finding Walkers

The best way to compile lists of walkers is to hold events in the targeted communities long before the election. Gather together people from the targeted area. Give them some ownership in the event. Make it fun. Have interesting speakers. Have a program to teach them about grassroots politics. Keep a list. This list will be the foundation to create the walks months later.

Locate potential paid walkers and give them initial training. So little serious door-to-door (knock and take) effort has been made in Texas that lists of trained community walkers are generally not available. Pick potential leaders from these events—the introductory events and the training sessions.

Working with Campaigns

From the beginning, work with local Democratic clubs, local elected officials, and all campaigns in the area you are walking, including state and local campaigns. Some campaigns will be mailing, phoning, walking, and running special radio or TV ads in the area. Hopefully, the messages are similar and the timing of your efforts will complement theirs, but candidates often have a message that works in swing precincts, but does not motivate the hard-core Democrat or minorities. This is where the slate materials and straight-ticket message discussed previously come into play. Some campaigns may be running their own GOTV block walking program. Be sure you are working with them and not duplicating efforts.

Door-to-Door Mechanics

- All walks should be conducted during early voting hours and on Election Day.
 - On weekdays it is best to walk from 5 PM until dark. But use 9 AM to 5 PM to target age 65+ households for vote-by-mail programs or rides to the polls during early vote. Walk all day on Election Day.
 - Early-voting walks should be after work and on weekdays, from 10 AM until the poll closes on Saturday, from 1 PM until the poll closes on Sunday, and from 9 AM until the poll closes on Election Day.
- There should be at least two (2) block walks during early voting and one (1) block walk on Election Day.
- Estimate the doors (households) on the walk lists for the area targeted. On average there are two (2) registered voters per door.

- Estimate walkers needed:
 - o It takes one (1) hour for each walker to cover an average of twenty (20) doors with "knock and drag." Walk lists should be divided into pieces that a person can walk in two (2) hours.
 - o The walkers from local communities shall be trained shortly before the walks begin.
 - o Walkers should be of the same ethnicity as the neighborhood they will work, and preferably from the same locality.
- Estimate supervisors and equipment needed:
 - o You need a supervisor (team lieutenant) for each six (6) walkers, and a team captain for six (6) sets of six (6) walkers.
 - o There should be one (1) polling transport vehicle for each team captain. Borrow one (1) if possible.
- The walkers should have colorful construction flags or surveyor flags and put one in the yard of everyone willing to be taken to vote. Vehicles travel a prearranged route and picks up the flags as they pick up the voter. They return until all flags are gone.
- All walks should be "knock and take" not just "knock and talk" or just "knock and hang."
- There should be one (1) sound unit for each team captain. It should have a tape player with tapes of someone who would excite the neighborhood. The chatter on the microphone and the tape should back up the walkers' message, which should be to get in the car now to go vote. Run the sound when the walkers are walking. You can get an adequate sound unit at Radio Shack. Get one with a microphone.
- Find an appropriate place to begin and end each walk.
- Have an occasional gathering of the walking team with refreshments. Team spirit!
- Put Area Captains in charge of large areas. Area captains organize the walks, assemble the walkers, train the walkers and fill out the information sheet on each walker with name, address, phone number, social security number, e-mail, fax, age, etc.

Materials

- Construction flags can be purchased at Lowes, Home Depot, etc.
- Paper walk lists and clip boards - keep it simple.
- Handouts (door hangers) should be different for each walk, becoming more intense for each succeeding walk. The pictures should feature a candidate or candidates and the issues most likely to motivate the neighborhood to vote.
 - o Remember, we are walking where people vote for Democrats if they vote.
 - o Be smart about the use of picture(s) and words.
 - o Print one side in Spanish in appropriate areas.
 - o A handout is cheaper than a door hanger.
- Water and snacks for walkers.

Making Your Block Walk Program Accountable

- Treat walkers as professional employees
- Remove any walker with a bad attitude.
- Audit the results
- Assure follow up where needed
- Make sure your program is doable

Appendix A The Precinct Convention

The precinct convention is the first step in the convention delegate process. That process begins at the precinct level and moves on to the county level and on to the state, and in presidential years, to the national convention. Much of what is done is set by state law, the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party*, and *Robert's Rules of Order*.

WHY

The precinct convention is held to 1) elect delegates to the county/senatorial district convention, and 2) adopt resolutions for submission to the county/senatorial district convention.

WHEN - WHERE

The precinct convention begins at 7:15 PM (by state law), typically at the primary election polling location.

WHO

The precinct convention is open to any person who voted in the Democratic primary that day or during early voting. A person who comes late to the convention may still participate; however, they can't change decisions already made.

PREPARATION

The precinct chair inspects the polling area to determine a good convention location. A large sign is placed at the polling place telling exactly when and where the convention will be held. Each voter should also be provided the information verbally and given a hand-out reminder.

The county party provides a convention packet with instructions, forms, and an easy to fill-in agenda/minutes. The packet is typically kept at the Primary polling place on Election Day.

HOW

The precinct convention is called to order by the temporary chair. The precinct chair typically acts as the temporary chair, but if the precinct chair is not available, any interested Democratic primary voter from the precinct may pick up the convention packet and convene the meeting as the temporary chair.

A list of primary voters should be obtained from the precinct election judge. The list will contain both Election Day and early voting voters.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. All attendees must sign in after it is verified that they voted in the primary election.
 - In presidential years, convention participants sign in by presidential preference. The convention will allocate and elect delegates based on each presidential candidate's showing in the sign-in.
 - In non-presidential years, participants have an option of either signing in support of a "petition" of a particular "political preference" or signing in at-large.
2. When sign-in of all in attendance is complete, a permanent convention chair is nominated and elected to run the convention.
3. A secretary is nominated and elected to fill in the agenda/minutes form.
4. The convention chair announces the number of delegates allocated to the county/senatorial district convention. The convention packet lists this number. [The precinct is entitled to elect one delegate for every 25 votes cast in that precinct for the Democratic gubernatorial nominee in the preceding General Election for governor.]

5. Delegates are nominated. An equal number of alternate delegates are nominated. The following rules apply:
 - Convention participants may nominate themselves or any other participant.
 - If a non-attendee desires to be nominated as a delegate or alternate, they must notify the precinct chair prior to the precinct convention.
 - If convention attendees signed in by presidential preference or petition preference, the chair announces the percentage of people attending for each preference and how many delegates and alternates are allotted for each.
 - In non-presidential years, the number of alternate delegates equals the total number of delegates allotted to the voter precinct
6. Nominations are held open until a motion is made, seconded, and passed by a two-thirds majority to close nominations.
7. Delegates and alternates are elected.
8. The precinct convention secretary records the names of the delegates and alternates on the agenda/minutes form. The Sign-in Sheets are annotated according to the sheet's instructions.
9. A majority vote of the precinct convention ratifies the election of the entire body of the delegates and alternates.
10. The precinct convention elects a delegation chair to represent the precinct's delegation at the county/senatorial convention.
11. The convention considers resolutions or positions on issues. Resolutions or issue position papers must be submitted in triplicate to be considered. They are voted on individually after proper discussion. A majority is required for passage.
12. By motion and vote, the precinct convention is concluded.
13. The convention chair and secretary sign the minutes.

POST CONVENTION

Originals and copies of the minutes, the convention sign-in list with the delegates and alternates marked, and any resolutions or other adopted items must be delivered by the permanent precinct convention chair as follows:

1. The original and one copy of each form are delivered to the county chair in one of the following ways.
 - By registered mail no later than the second day after the election
 - In person no later than 5:00 PM on the third day after the election
[In person down at the county courthouse Primary night is even better.]
2. The second copy of the minutes, marked sign-in lists and resolutions or other items must be sent to the state Party in the envelope provided.
3. The third copy is retained by the convention chair.

Appendix B The County/Senatorial District Convention

Elected delegates and alternates from the precinct conventions attend the county conventions or senatorial district conventions. Local, state, and federal candidates and elected officials should be invited to the convention. Much of what is done is set by state law, the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party*, and *Robert's Rules of Order*.

The purposes of the county or senatorial district conventions, in the urban counties with multiple senate districts, are the following:

- To elect delegates and alternates to the state convention
- To adopt resolutions that will be passed on to the state convention
- To establish platform positions to supplement the *State Party Platform*

The rules for county convention/senatorial district convention are as follows:

- A county convention is held if the county is in a single senate district. The county chair and county executive committee organize it. State Democratic Executive Committee members may also give assistance.
- A senatorial district convention is held if the parts of one county belong to more than one senate district. All or some of the senate districts in a county may have a joint convention, but each senatorial district must at least elect its own delegates, alternates and at-large delegates.

Setting the Date

The county and senatorial district conventions are held on the third Saturday after the first Primary. However, if that date occurs during Passover or on the day following Good Friday, the Convention is held on the next Saturday that does not occur during Passover or on the day following Good Friday.

Location Selection

The time and location of the convention are determined by the county executive committee. Typically, the county chair or the senate district committee appoints a person or small committee to find a location for the convention.

The location must be easily accessible and large enough to accommodate all participants. The convention shall be properly publicized and in accordance with state law.

The convention location must be large enough to hold delegates, visitors, and guests, and be accessible and have ample parking. For seating in a non-presidential year, expect about 70% of the allotted precinct delegations, whereas in presidential election years, expect close to 90%. The location must also have at least three rooms where committees can hold their meetings.

Committees

The county or senatorial district conventions function with the use of the following four committees. There may also be a decorating committee, entertainment committee and/or speaker committee. Chairpersons and members of the committees are elected at a CEC meeting or at the senate district committee.

- The **Credentials Committee** signs in delegates and alternates; establishes the permanent roll of the convention; and makes recommendations to the Convention to resolve challenges to credentials of delegates to the state convention.

- The **Rules and Procedures Committee** ensures the convention follows *TDP Rules* and appropriate protocols.
- The **Nominations Committee** ensures the proper number and breakdown of delegates to the State Convention.
- The **Platform and Resolutions Committee** considers resolutions submitted to the convention and makes recommendations on those resolutions to the convention. This committee typically meets in advance of the convention to sort through the multitudes of submitted resolutions.

Order of Business

The Texas Democratic Party provides a packet with all appropriate forms to conduct the convention, including a Minutes Form that acts as an agenda.

1. Delegates, alternates, visitors, and guests sign in with the credentials committee.
2. Delegates, visitors, and guests are seated while the credential committee attends its work of quorum determination.
3. Opening ceremonies typically begin with a color guard.
4. The temporary chair of the convention calls the meeting to order. A temporary secretary and parliamentarian are nominated and elected. A temporary roll of delegates is established and credential and rules reports are made.
5. A permanent convention chair, secretary, and other officers necessary to conduct the convention are nominated and elected.
6. Delegates then proceed to precinct caucuses to elect delegates and alternates to the state convention. Each precinct is entitled to one state convention delegate for every 300 votes cast in that precinct for the Democratic nominee for governor. If a precinct does not qualify for its own delegate position, it is grouped with other precincts to elect delegates.
7. The results of the elections within the precinct caucuses are collected and given to the nominations committee. This committee then nominates a slate of at-large delegates that are used to balance the delegation to the state convention to reflect the sign-in by political preference (if any), the ethnic make-up, age and gender balance of the delegates of the county or senatorial district.
8. The convention considers reports from the platform and resolutions committee and conducts other business, as necessary.
9. The convention adjourns.

The convention occasionally goes into a recess when some committees meet. Listening to candidates, attending workshops, listening in on the committee meetings, or visiting old friends and meeting new ones may fill this time.

Appendix C The State Convention

The purpose of the State Convention is to conduct the business of the Party as follows:

- Announce nominations of state officers
- Elect the SDEC members
- Pass resolutions
- Adopt a platform
- Elect the Party's officers
- Elect Democratic National Committee members and delegates and alternates to the National Convention in presidential years.

A State Democratic Executive Committee meeting precedes the state convention. Specific information about the State Convention is mailed to each delegate and alternate in advance of the event. Information is also available on the Internet.

Attendees of the convention must realize that, because the purpose of the convention is to conduct the Party's business, not every moment will be exciting.

The convention occasionally goes into a recess when some committees meet. Listening to candidates, attending workshops, listening in on the committee meetings, or visiting old friends and meeting new ones may fill this time.

Time / Place / Participants

The Texas State Convention is held in June of even-numbered years at a location selected by the State Democratic Executive Committee. Elected delegates and alternates are grouped by senate district. Limited seating for guests is available. Guest passes may be available from the State Party Office.

Order of Business

The senatorial district caucuses meet on Friday afternoon before the convention is called to order. The caucus elects the district's representative on the Credentials Committee. This committee will decide any disputes concerning who will be a delegate to the state convention.

The Texas State Convention is conducted in the following order:

1. The convention is called to order by the State Chair.
2. Temporary Credentials and Temporary Resolutions Committees are set.
3. A Temporary Roll is established and announcements made.
4. The convention then recesses for senate district caucuses to do the following:
 - a) Elect male and female representatives to the State Democratic Executive Committee
 - b) Elect members to serve on the permanent convention committees: Credentials, Nominations, Platform, Resolutions, and Rules
 - c) Form a Nominations Committee for at-large delegates to the National Convention in presidential election years.

The State Chair reconvenes the Texas State Convention to do the following:

5. Opening ceremonies are held.
6. Welcoming addresses, opening remarks, and speeches made by the convention chair and invited dignitaries are heard.

7. The reports from the various committees as they are ready are considered.
8. Permanent committees are set.
9. A State Chair and other officers are elected.
10. In years when a presidential election is held, each delegation elects delegates to the National Convention.
11. In years when a presidential election is held, each delegation elects electors who may cast their votes for the President at the Electoral College.
12. In presidential years, the state convention also elects the Texas members of the Democratic National Committee to four-year terms.
13. The *State Party Platform* is adopted.
14. Resolutions are debated and voted upon.
15. Other business before the convention is accomplished.
16. The convention, upon completion of business, adjourns.

Appendix D Event Planning Checklists

Parade Float / Vehicle

Having a Democratic vehicle or float in a parade is a high-visibility activity and a lot of fun. The following are important steps in having a vehicle or float in a parade:

- Watch local papers, TV, and flyers for parade announcements.
- Contact the parade organizers for entry forms.
- Find someone with a car (convertibles are nice) or pickup truck that is willing to have the vehicle decorated. A float is better, but then a trailer, a tow vehicle, and more decorations are needed
- Return the entry form in a timely manner (with the entry fee, if required).
- Set a meeting time/place for participants to gather, typically set by the parade organizers.
- Send out notifications.
- Assemble decorations and purchase tossing goodies (most parades allow you to throw candy or other 'light' items such as beads).
- Consider something to be noticed such as waving American flags and/or blowing bubbles in all parades, even those that do not allow 'tossing.'
- If you wish to pass out material along the parade route, check with organizers to see what is allowed.
- Have adequate seating on the pickup or float. Standing may be unsafe, and the safety of all participants is paramount. Provide a safety briefing before starting.
- Have 2-way communication between the tow vehicle and float.
- Provide refreshments, especially for the longer parades.
- Suggest to participants that they bring sunscreen and hats.

Booth

Having a Democratic booth at a fair is a high visibility activity and a great way to meet and talk to people. The following are important steps to having a successful booth:

- Watch local papers, TV, and flyers for fair announcements.
- Contact the organizers for entry forms.
- Return the form, with entry fee, as required. Check the form to see whether they provide electricity and whether there is a charge.
- Determine what you'll need to furnish:
 - A small tent--typically you get a 10X10 booth space. Have extra rope and tie-down weights (plastic water bottles that can be filled on-site work well).
 - Portable tables and chairs
 - Signs, decorating material, table coverings, and material tie-downs
 - Handout material such as free pamphlets, buttons, and bumper stickers
 - Bumper stickers, buttons, pins, etc. Most organizations allow their sale. Have a cash box for money collected.
 - Garbage bags and paper towels
 - Electric extension cords
 - Adequate lighting (for night events)
 - Inclement weather gear
 - A supply of food and drink for the volunteers
 - **Sign-up sheets** Many of your visitors may become future activists
 - A hinged vee formed of pegboards with elastic to create holders is good for displaying bumper stickers. People love reading the bumper stickers.
- The organizers may allow you to set up the day before or the morning of the fair.
- Make sure you have enough volunteers not only to staff the booth, but to set it up and take it down.

Hot Dog Picnic, Ice Cream Socials, Backyard Barbeque

The following checklist is for hot dog picnics, but can be applied to any number of events such as ice cream socials and backyard barbeques (non-potluck).

Determine Purpose

- Group fun
- High visibility and/or increasing volunteers or membership

Determine Date and Time

- Group fun - pick what's best for the group
- High visibility - weekend afternoons are best

Determine Location

- Group fun - backyard or local park
- High visibility - city or county parks on main highways with good traffic

Secure Location

- Back yard - get a volunteer's back yard
- City or county park
 - Check out park - does it have enough picnic tables, restrooms, parking, water/electricity available, trash cans and/or dumpsters, shade?
 - Call city or county parks and recreation department - find out where to go to secure location (2 months prior)
 - Go to appropriate office and secure date and location (1 month prior)
 - Be prepared to pay fee and deposit
 - For local park you may need resident of that city to make reservations
 - Ask about general rules - if possible, get a copy of the rules
 - Prepare to answer questions you may be asked
 - Number of attendees (estimate low)
 - Will alcohol be served? - you need to hire law enforcement
 - **Follow their rules!**

Requisition of Food and Supplies - Based on expected number of attendees

- Hot dogs and buns
 - 2 hot dogs per person
 - 1 package of turkey dogs (for dietary restrictions) per 20 people attending.
- Chips
 - 1 bag per person
 - Individual variety packs work best
- Optional additional foods
 - Potato salads or cole slaws (requires cooling) 1 quart per 20 people
 - Cookies or desserts

- Condiments
 - Mustard and catsup (individual packets or squeeze bottles), relish (jar or squeeze bottles), sauerkraut (jar)
 - Optional - mayonnaise (individual packets or squeeze bottles)
- Serving Utensils
 - Long-handled tongs
 - Slotted spoons
 - Forks
 - Small sharp knife
- Coolers and ice (or cold packs)
 - Food (keep separate from anything else)
 - Drinks
 - Ice for drinks
- Garbage can/s - as needed
- Drinks
 - Plastic cups 1 per person
 - 5-gallon container (self-serve) of lemonade or ice tea
 - Bring additional mix, water, and ice to make more
 - Assure someone is responsible for making replacements
 - Bottled water (currently more popular than canned drinks)
 - Individual small bottles 1 per person
 - Additional bottles if no self-serve container
 - Canned drinks
 - Variety of regular and diet, plus some caffeine-free canned drinks (1 per person if you have bottled water but no self-serve container)
 - Optional - variety of 2-liter bottles (but must have cups and ice)
 - Wine (if permitted)
 - Variety of boxes (glass containers frequently not allowed)
 - Variety of bottles - don't forget corkscrew
 - Beer (if permitted)
 - Variety of regular and light
 - 1 can or bottle per 5 people depending on the group
 - Optional – 5-gallon container (self-serve) of homemade sangria (remember ice)

Coolers and Ice

Label all coolers

- 1 small cooler for ice for drinks with 2 cups for serving ice
- 1 or 2 large or very large coolers with ice for cooling bottled water and canned drinks
- 1 cooler with ice for cooling alcoholic drinks (keep separate from non-alcoholic drinks)
- 1 large cooler with extra ice

Paper Goods and Supplies

Suggestion: Purchase in bulk quantity when possible

- Hot dog trays 2 per person
- Paper/plastic plates (large or small) at least 1 per person
- Plastic silverware at least one set per person
- Napkins (1-2 large packages)
- Paper towels (1-2 rolls)
- Trash bags - several food-store plastic bags and 1 box of garbage-can size
- Masking tape (1 wide roll)
- Table cloths (optional)
- Handi-wipes or baby wipes
- Plastic gloves for food handlers

Cooking equipment

- 1 small portable (table-top) gas grill with fuel (works as well as big and is easier to move)
- 1 spare fuel tank
- Long-tip lighter (matches as backup)
- Scissors (for cutting food only)
- Scissors (for cutting open packages)
- Serving Utensils
 - Long-handled tongs
 - Slotted spoons
 - Forks
 - Small sharp knife

Tables and Chairs

- 1 sign-in and/or donation table and chair/s
- 1 cooking table and chair
- 1 foodstuffs table
- Picnic table and/or portable tables
- Chairs - stackable plastic chairs work well
 - Supplied by organization
 - Supplied by attendees

Miscellaneous

- Flags and banners
- First aid kit
- Small fire extinguisher
- Bullhorn - for announcements
- Handouts about group - other groups
- Name tags and markers

- Sign-in sheets and pens
- Candidate material
- Fundraising items for sale/donations
- Tents and/or sun umbrellas - if no shade
- Children's toys/games - someone should be responsible for watching over activities

Invitations

- Homemade or locally printed postcards (4 per page) - include date, time, location, charge, etc.
 - Mail to group and/or larger list 2 weeks prior to event (blind mailings = 3% response)
 - D or DDs - can utilize precinct chairs for personal messages. Additional postage may be needed. (D=voted Democratic in the last primary, DD=voted Democratic in two out of the last three primaries.)
 - Elected officials
 - Candidates
 - Labels
 - Group list
 - Voter list
- Letters - usually not worth cost
- Flyers - hand out at meetings
- Internet - distribution / websites / blogs
- Robo-calling or phone-tree calling

Scheduling

- 30 minutes minimum for setup - depending on number of volunteers
- 3 to 4 hours for event
- 30 minutes minimum for cleanup - depending on number of volunteers

Financial Planning

- Expect total costs about \$3/person; \$2/person for second event (from bulk purchase leftovers of equipment and packaged food)
- Event money supplied by group or sponsors
- Donations - Taking donations typically brings in as much as charging for event
 - Have well-marked small pail or clear container as donation jar (put in a few \$5's and \$10's as 'seed' money - can be used to purchase more supplies if needed)
 - Have change or someone responsible for making change
 - Have someone responsible to get money to treasurer
- Fees \$5 adults, \$2 children, 4 and under free (suggested amounts)
 - Have large poster with amounts clearly listed
 - Have change
 - Have someone responsible to make change
 - Have someone responsible to get money to treasurer

Potluck Dinner / Barbeque

The following checklist is for a potluck dinner or potluck barbeque.

Select Coordinators

- Food Coordinators
 - RSVP person for food being brought
 - Person for purchasing food and supplies
- Setup-Cleanup / Decorations Coordinator
- Invitation Coordinator

Determine Purpose

- Group Fun
- High visibility and/or increasing volunteers or membership

Determine Date and Time

- For group fun - pick what's best for the group
- For high visibility - evenings and weekend afternoons are best

Determine Location

- Group fun
 - Backyard
 - Local park
- High visibility
 - Facility of adequate size for expected attendance
 - City or county parks on main highways with good traffic

Secure Location

- Volunteer's backyard
- City or county park / facility
 - Check out park / facility - Does it have enough (picnic) tables, chairs, restrooms, parking, (shade), water/electricity available, trash cans and/or dumpsters
 - Call city or county Parks and Recreation Department or facility - find out where to go to secure location (2 months prior)
 - Go to appropriate office and secure date and location / sign contract (1 to 2 months prior)
 - Be prepared to pay fee and deposit
 - For local park you may need resident of that city to make reservations
 - General rules – **Follow their rules**
 - Ask about rules
 - Get a copy of rules, if possible!
 - Questions you may be asked
 - Number of attendees (make best guess)
 - Will alcohol be served - you may need to hire law enforcement

Requisition of Food and Supplies - Based on expected number of attendees

- Main dish (if group supplying)
- Side dishes (if group supplying)
- Bread(s) (if group is supplying)
- Desserts (if group is supplying)
- Condiments
 - Mustard, Catsup, Mayonnaise, Relish
 - Individual packets or squeeze bottles
- Serving Utensils
 - Long-handled tongs
 - Slotted spoons
 - Forks
- Cooler/s and ice (or cold packs) for food (keep separate from anything else)
- Garbage can/s - as needed
- Drinks
 - Plastic cups 1 per person
 - 5-gallon container (self-serve) of lemonade or ice tea
 - Bring additional mix, water, and ice to make more
 - Assure someone is responsible for making replacements
 - Bottled water (currently more popular than canned drinks)
 - Individual small bottles 1 per person
 - Additional bottles if no self-serve container
 - Canned drinks
 - Variety of regular and diet, plus some caffeine-free canned drinks (1 per person if you have bottled water but no self-serve container)
 - Optional - variety of 2-liter bottles (but must have cups and ice)
 - Wine (if permitted)
 - Variety of boxes (glass containers frequently not allowed)
 - Variety of bottles - don't forget corkscrew
 - Beer (if permitted)
 - Variety of regular and light
 - 1 can or bottle per 5 people depending on the group
 - Optional – 5-gallon container (self-serve) of homemade sangria (remember ice)

Coolers & Ice

- Suggestion: Use masking tape to label all coolers
- 1 small cooler for ice for drinks
 - Place 2 plastic cups in cooler for serving ice
- 1 or 2 large or very large coolers with ice for bottled water/canned drinks
- 1 cooler with ice for alcoholic drinks (keep separate from non-alcoholic drinks)
- 1 large cooler with spare ice

Paper Goods & Supplies

- Suggestion: Purchase in bulk quantity when possible
- Large paper/plastic plates 1/person
- Small paper/plastic plates 1/person
- Plastic silverware - at least one set per person
- Napkins (1-2 large packages)
- Paper towels (1-2 rolls)
- Trash bags - several food-store plastic bags & 1 box of garbage can size
- Masking tape (1 wide roll)
- Table cloths (optional)
- Handi-wipes or baby wipes
- Plastic gloves - for food handlers

Cooking / Heating Equipment

- Chafing dishes
- Spare fuel
- Long-tip lighter (matches as backup)
- Scissors (for food only)
- Scissors (for cutting open packages)
- Utensils - long-handled tongs & small sharp knife

Tables and chairs

- 1 sign-in and/or donation table & chair/s
- Several for holding the food
- Outdoor event
 - Picnic table and/or portable tables
 - Chairs - stackable plastic chairs work well
 - Supplied by organization
 - Supplied by attendees

Miscellaneous

- Flags and Banners
- First aid kit
- Small fire extinguisher
- Bull horn - for announcements
- Handouts about group - other groups
- Name tags and markers
- Sign-in sheets and pens
- Candidate material
- Fundraising items for sale/donations
- Tent/s and/or sun umbrella/s- if no shade

- Children's toys/games - someone should be responsible for watching over activities

Invitations

- Home-made or locally printed post cards (4 per page) - include date, time, location, RSVP Coordinator, charge, etc.
 - Mail to group and/or larger list 2 weeks prior to event (blind mailings = 3% response)
 - D or DDs - can utilize precinct chairs for personal messages. Additional postage may be needed. (D=voted Democratic in the last primary, DD=voted in the last 2 Democratic primary or voted Democratic in 2 out of the last 3 primaries.)
 - Elected officials
 - Candidates
 - Labels
 - Group list
 - Voter list
- Letters - usually not worth cost
- Flyers - hand out at meetings
- Internet - distribution / web sites
- Robo-calling or phone-tree calling

Scheduling

- 30 minutes minimum for setup - depending on number of volunteers
- 2 to 4 hours event
- 30 minutes minimum for cleanup - depending on number of volunteers

Financial Planning

- Expect total costs about \$4/person; \$3/person for second event (from bulk purchase leftovers of supplies and packaged food).
- Event money fronted by group or sponsors
- Pricing: Taking donations typically brings in as much as charging for event
- Donations
 - Have well-marked small pail or clear container as donation jar (put in a few \$5's and \$10's as 'seed' money - can be used to purchase more supplies if needed)
 - No need to have change and someone responsible to make change (can use seed money to make change if you have to)
- Fees \$5 adults, \$2 children, 4 and under free (suggested amounts)
 - Have large poster with amounts clearly listed
 - Have a donation jar

Fundraiser or Dinner Checklist

6 Weeks from Event

- ☐ Select event date (no Wednesdays or Sundays in most areas)
- ☐ Secure event location and caterer or have volunteers prepare the food
- ☐ Set date for organizational meeting and develop list of tasks to assign
- ☐ Develop event fundraising goal
- ☐ Develop a host committee list
- ☐ Decide ticket costs or sponsorship levels
- ☐ Contact potential host committee members and secure money commitments
- ☐ Clean up and finalize mailing list for invitations
- ☐ Design and print invitations and tickets

4 Weeks before Event

- ☐ Check in with host committee members by phone or meeting
- ☐ Send letter inviting all local officials as guests
- ☐ Plan entertainment and book a photographer if necessary
- ☐ Hold organizational meeting to assign tasks like addressing invitations, decorating, greeting and sign-in, taking photos, and clean-up

3 Weeks from Event

- ☐ Mail invitations or solicitation letters
- ☐ Recruit a group to create decorations, sign-in sheets, nametags, and program design, as well as coordinate set-up and clean-up
- ☐ Continue to call and solicit contributions

2 Weeks before Event

- ☐ Run ads in local/neighborhood papers or on radio, if necessary
- ☐ Have your event included on the community calendars
- ☐ Continue to call and solicit contributions
- ☐ Develop and print program
- ☐ Finalize details of who will speak and when
- ☐ Confirm with caterer, entertainment, and location
- ☐ Contact the media

1 Week before Event

- ☐ Phone bank to remind guests and get a head count

2-3 Days before Event

- ☐ Prepare nametags (local officials and sponsors)

1-2 Days before Event

- ☐ Contact the media

Day of Event

- ☐ Hold final organizational meeting at event site
- ☐ Fax or e-mail event reminder to sponsors and steering committee
- ☐ Set up your event EARLY
- ☐ Make sure you have the following:
 - Plenty of volunteers to help you
 - An area for elected official check-in
 - Sign-in sheets
 - Ballpoint pens (for sign-in sheets)
 - Sharpie markers (for name tags)
 - Name tags for elected officials and sponsors
 - Blank name tags
 - Bumper stickers
 - Contribution envelopes
 - Change for ticket purchases
 - Container to collect contributions at the door
 - Decorations
 - Tape and scissors
 - Thank-you board to showcase your sponsors

Day after Event

- ☐ Send thank-you letters to host committee, volunteers, contributors, and attendees
- ☐ Call those who pledged money, but did not attend/contribute
- ☐ Send a thank-you gift, if someone hosted the event in their home

Community/Neighborhood Coffee Checklist

2 Weeks from Event

- ☐ Select date for event
- ☐ Secure event location
- ☐ Place ads in weekly or community newspapers
- ☐ Prepare/send postcards to community leader list and voters in the area

1 Week from Event

- ☐ Prepare and distribute fliers to area shops, city hall, post offices, libraries, etc.
- ☐ Assign volunteers/staff to assist with set-up, refreshments, sign-in, photos, etc.
- ☐ Prepare handouts and collect state brochures, maps, etc.
- ☐ Prepare sign-in sheets

1-2 Days before Event

- ☐ Reminder calls to invitees

Day of Event

- ☐ Sign-in sheets
- ☐ Nametags
- ☐ Member and/or staff business cards
- ☐ Pens/pencils
- ☐ Refreshments, if not held at restaurant
- ☐ Disposable cameras

Day after Event

- ☐ Send thank-you letters to attendees, helpers, hosts, and media

How to Organize a Rally

A well-attended, well-publicized rally with a good purpose and theme, at an effective location, at a good time and day, with easily photographed elements will have a big impact.

Organizing a rally

The key to the success of a rally is getting the message across.

Determine the purpose of the rally

A rally can accomplish a number of objectives at the same time:

- Generate much needed media (local, state, or national magazines, radio and TV stations, electronic forums) attention for our issue or candidate
- Show the power of your group
- Have a long-term effect on those witnessing the rally.
- Inform people where to find like-minded groups of people
- Give notice to politicians on the specific issues
- Encourage voter turnout during elections

Set the Date

Consider several things when you set the date to get the best crowd:

- Set the date VERY early, at least one month in advance
- Set the time when people will attend (probably a weekend afternoon)
- Reset the day and time early in the process if necessary to get the best location

Find a location

Consider these factors in choosing a location:

- Can everyone easily reach the location?
- Is there ample parking or will car pools be needed?
- Is there adequate power for lighting and sound systems?
- Can the rally legally be held at the time and place you want?
 - Call local or county officials to determine whether you need a permit to hold a rally
 - Call your local ACLU or city or county office if there is a problem
- For voter turnout: is there a polling location nearby?

Get people to attend

People must attend and rally, or there is no rally. A mixture of ages and ethnic groups makes the group interesting.

To spread the word and build a group, you need these resources:

- Local Democratic clubs
- Call lists
- E-mail lists

- Websites
- Blogs

Contact the media

Well-organized steps are necessary to establish effective media (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and electronic forums) coverage.

Groups should have up-to-date lists of media sources available. The lists must include the following information that news departments will furnish:

- Contact names
- Telephone numbers
- Fax numbers
- E-mail addresses

Before each event, take the following actions:

- Call your contact names at least one week before the rally, if possible
- Fax and e-mail a media release stating the time, date, and place and the reason for the rally
- Call the media the day of the event, and ask whether they intend to cover it
- Have one or more media spokespersons for the event with a well-developed message
- Make sure the point of the rally is in a written message to pass out to the media
- Make sure usable quotes are in a written message to pass out to the media
- Take pictures

After the event, do the following (these steps are repeated in the “After the Rally” section).

- Write a story featuring the event
- Send the story with pictures to all of your media contacts that did not attend
- Thank all of your media contacts that did attend

Signs, Banners, and Flags

U.S. and Texas flags are necessary.

Remember these rules when working with signs:

- Make sure some of the signs reflect your theme
- Make sure some of the signs are easy to read from a long distance
- Make signs with short, to-the-point messages
- Use color
- Keep the signs clean and remove any sign that is questionable
- Never tease or insult a fellow Democrat
- Make sure the sticks on the signs adhere to any regulations

Costumes make GREAT pictures. These can be purchased at a fun shop for about \$30 each.

Chants and Cheers

Noise is an important element of a rally. Prepare in advance in the following ways to use noise effectively:

- Create simple chants and cheers that express the theme
- Select a reoccurring event to trigger a cheer, such as every time a blue car drives by
- Have a bullhorn if necessary, but make sure you have necessary permits

Have the Rally

If possible, plan in advance what you will do at your rally. The rally should be fun and effective. The following are important factors for a good rally:

- Plan a theme for your rally that is energizing, peaceful, and legal
- Make sure the point of the rally is obvious
- Plan activities for your rally that can be photographed effectively
- Have plenty of signs, some of which must be easily photographed
- Ensure there is a still digital camera and a video camera
- Video tape the event
- Take plenty of pictures for your website.
- Take a variety of pictures for the media that cannot attend
- Have hand-out material for people who are attracted to the rally
- Help the various groups participating to get to know each other

Consider paying an off-duty police officer for protection and for guidance on the laws.

After the Rally

The rally is over, but the following work is to be done:

- Collect the signs for future use
- Make sure the place is left clean
- Thank the police for their help
- Thank all of your media contacts that did attend
- Have an after-rally party or dinner. These functions are a good time to try to get to know others in the group and welcome new faces. This will be the time to relax, have fun, and watch your coverage on the local TV stations.
- Write a story featuring the event
- Send the story with pictures to all of your media contacts that did not attend
- Thank all of your media contacts that published a story or pictures
- Update your website
- Update any relevant blogs
- Update your telephone lists
- Update your e-mail lists

How to Organize a Protest

The key to the success of a protest is getting the message across. A well-attended, well-publicized protest with a good purpose and theme, at an effective location, at a good time and day, with easily photographed elements will have a big impact.

Determine the purpose of the protest

A protest can accomplish a number of things at the same time:

- Generate much needed media (local, state, or national magazines, radio and TV stations, electronic forums) attention for our issue or candidate
- Show the power of your group
- Disrupt an event designed to showcase the opposition and discourage future showcasing events or attendance at such events
- Have a long-term effect on those witnessing the protest.
- Inform people where to find like-minded groups of people
- Provide an opportunity to distribute information about the protest and your group

An example of a protest to disrupt an event designed to showcase a candidate of another party: A protest was assembled across the street from an appearance by a local politician. The cars honking at the protestors disrupted the event, with many in attendance leaving.

At another event, 150 protestors with signs highlighting his failures were waiting for a local congressman being “honored by a government-financed institution.” He had a counterprotest of only four individuals. Needless to say, the counterprotest was nothing more than an additional embarrassment to the congressman. The institution prepared elaborate food for 50 invited guests; fewer than ten crossed the protest line. Some invited guests came and then left when they saw the media photographing the protestors and guests.

“Harassment,” although that is a harsh word, can wear thin on a candidate and staff. Again, the long-term effects can accumulate.

Set the date

Consider several things when you set the date to get the best crowd:

- Set the date VERY early, at least one month in advance
- Set the time when people will attend (probably a weekend afternoon)
- Reset the day and time early in the process if necessary to get the best location

Sometimes events set the date. For example, if a politician is suddenly indicted or campaign headquarters suddenly opened, you may have to react quickly.

Find a location

Consider these factors in choosing a location:

- Can everyone easily reach the location?
- Is there ample parking or will car pools be needed?
- Is there adequate power for lighting and sound systems?
- Can the rally legally be held at the time and place you want?

- Call local or county officials to determine whether you need a permit to hold a protest
- Call your local ACLU or city or county office if there is a problem

Get people to attend

People must attend and protest, or there is no protest.

Get specific information on the event to determine how many people will be necessary to conduct the protest. Sometimes just a handful is enough; other times a large protest is necessary to generate interest and have an effect. A small gathering where a large crowd is needed only dissolves the purpose of the protest.

To spread the word and build a group, you need these resources:

- Local Democratic clubs
- Call lists
- E-mail lists
- Websites
- Blogs

A mixture of ages and ethnic groups makes is usually best. However, depending on the purpose of your protest, you may want to tailor your crowd to the issue (i.e., medicare cuts – seniors, student loans – students, etc.)

Contact the media

Well-organized steps are necessary to establish effective media (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and electronic forums) coverage.

Groups should have up-to-date lists of media sources available. The lists must include the following information that news departments will furnish:

- Contact names
- Telephone numbers
- Fax numbers
- E-mail addresses

Before each event, take the following actions:

- Call your contact names at least one week before the protest, if possible
- Fax and e-mail a media release stating the time, date, and place and the reason for the protest
- Call the media the day of the event, and ask whether they intend to cover it
- Have one or more media spokesperson for the event with a well-developed message
- Make sure the point of the protest is in a written message to pass out to the media
- Make sure usable quotes are in a written message to pass out to the media
- Take pictures

After the event, do the following (these steps are repeated in the “After the Protest” section).

- Write a story featuring the event
- Send the story with pictures to all of your media contacts that did not attend
- Thank all of your media contacts that did attend

Signs, Banners, and Flags

U.S. and Texas flags are necessary.

Remember these rules when working with signs:

- Make sure some of the signs reflect your theme
- Make sure some of the signs are easy to read from a long distance
- Make signs with short, to-the-point messages
- Use color
- Keep the signs clean and remove any sign that is questionable
- Never tease or insult a fellow Democrat
- Make sure the sticks on the signs adhere to any regulations

Costumes make GREAT pictures. These can be purchased at a fun shop for about \$30 each.

Chants and cheers

Noise is an important element of a protest. Prepare in advance in the following ways to use noise effectively:

- Create simple chants and cheers that express the theme
- Select a reoccurring event to trigger a cheer, such as every time a blue car drives by
- Have a bullhorn if necessary, but make sure you have necessary permits

Have the Protest

If possible, plan in advance what you will do at your protest. The protest should be fun and effective. The following are important factors for a good protest:

- Plan a theme for your protest that is energizing, peaceful, and legal
- Make sure the point of the protest is obvious
- Plan activities for your protest that can be photographed effectively
- Have plenty of signs, some of which must be easily photographed
- Ensure there is a still digital camera and a video camera
- Video tape the event
- Take plenty of pictures for your website.
- Take a variety of pictures for the media that cannot attend
- Have hand-out material for people who are attracted to the protest
- Help the various groups participating to get to know each other

Consider paying an off-duty police officer for protection and for guidance on the laws.

After the protest

The protest is over, but the following work is to be done:

- Collect the signs for future use
- Make sure the place is left clean
- Thank the police for their help
- Thank all of your media contacts that did attend

- Have an after-protest party or dinner. These functions are a good time to try to get to know others in the group and welcome new faces. This will be the time to relax, have fun, and watch your coverage on the local TV stations.
- Write a story featuring the event
- Send the story with pictures to all of your media contacts that did not attend
- Thank all of your media contacts that published a story or pictures
- Update your website
- Update any relevant blogs
- Update your telephone lists
- Update your e-mail lists

How to Organize a Town Hall Meeting

Organizing a town hall meeting

The key to the success of a town hall meeting will come in getting our message across. A town hall meeting can get local and even national attention, greatly increase membership to your organization, and give notice to politicians on the specific issue(s). A town hall meeting should always be considered to be a fun event, one that excites membership and increases interest in your organization and cause.

Select a single issue for the town hall meeting. Current “hot” topics draw more media.

Determine the purpose of the town hall meeting

A town hall meeting can accomplish a number of things at the same time:

- Generate much needed media (local, state, or national magazines, radio and TV stations, electronic forums) attention for our issue or candidate
- Show the power of your group
- Have a long-term effect on those witnessing the town hall meeting.
- Inform people where to find like-minded groups of people
- Provide an opportunity to distribute information about the town hall meeting and your group

Set the date

Consider several things when you set the date to get the best crowd:

- Set the date VERY early, at least one month in advance
- Set the time when people will attend (probably a weekend afternoon)

Find a location

Consider these factors in choosing a location:

- Can everyone easily reach the location?
- Is there ample parking or will car pools be needed?
- Is there adequate power for lighting and sound systems?
- Can the town hall meeting legally be held at the time and place you want?
- Call local or county officials to determine whether you need a permit to hold a town hall meeting
- Call your local ACLU or city or county office if there is a problem

Get people to attend

People must attend and town hall meeting, or there is no town hall meeting.

Get specific information on the event to determine how many people will be necessary to conduct the town hall meeting. Sometimes just a handful is enough; other times a large town hall meeting is necessary to generate interest and have an effect. A small gathering where a large crowd is needed only dissolves the purpose of the town hall meeting.

To spread the word and build a group, you need these resources:

- Local Democratic clubs
- Call lists
- E-mail lists
- Websites
- Blogs

A mixture of ages and ethnic groups makes the group interesting.

Contact the media

Well-organized steps are necessary to establish effective media (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and electronic forums) coverage.

Groups should have up-to-date lists of media sources available. The lists must include the following information that news departments will furnish:

- Contact names
- Telephone numbers
- Fax numbers
- E-mail addresses

Before each event, take the following actions:

- Call your contact names at least one week before the town hall meeting, if possible
- Fax and e-mail a media release stating the time, date, and place and the reason for the town hall meeting
- Call the media the day of the event, and ask whether they intend to cover it
- Have one or more media spokesperson for the event with a well-developed message
- Make sure the point of the town hall meeting is in a written message to pass out to the media
- Make sure usable quotes are in a written message to pass out to the media
- Take pictures

After the event, do the following (these steps are repeated in the “After the Town hall meeting” section).

- Write a story featuring the event
- Send the story with pictures to all of your media contacts that did not attend
- Thank all of your media contacts that did attend

Signs, Banners, and Flags

U.S. and Texas flags are necessary.

Remember these rules when working with signs:

- Make sure some of the signs reflect your theme
- Make sure some of the signs are easy to read from a long distance
- Make signs with short, to-the-point messages
- Use color
- Keep the signs clean and remove any sign that is questionable
- Never tease or insult a fellow Democrat
- Make sure the sticks on the signs adhere to any regulations

Costumes make GREAT pictures. These can be purchased at a fun shop for about \$30 each.

Chants and cheers

Noise is an important element of a town hall meeting. Prepare in advance in the following ways to use noise effectively:

- Create simple chants and cheers that express the theme
- Select a reoccurring event to trigger a cheer, such as every time **a leader makes a certain hand motion.**
- Have a bullhorn if necessary, but make sure you have necessary permits

Have the Town hall meeting

Plan in advance what you will do at your town hall meeting. The town hall meeting should be fun and effective. The following are important factors for a good town hall meeting:

- Plan a town hall meeting that is energizing, peaceful, and legal
- Make sure the point of the town hall meeting is obvious
- Plan activities for your town hall meeting that can be photographed effectively
- Have plenty of signs, some of which must be easily photographed
- Ensure there is a still digital camera and a video camera
- Video tape the event
- Take plenty of pictures for your website.
- Take a variety of pictures for the media that cannot attend
- Have hand-out material for people who are attracted to the town hall meeting
- Help the various groups participating to get to know each other
- Sign in attendees

Consider paying an off-duty police officer for protection and for guidance on the laws.

After the town hall meeting

The town hall meeting is over, but the following work is to be done:

- Collect the signs for future use
- Make sure the place is left clean
- Thank the police for their help
- Thank all of your media contacts that did attend
- Have an after-town-hall-meeting party or dinner These functions are a good time to try to get to know others in the group and welcome new faces. This will be the time to relax, have fun, and watch your coverage on the local TV stations.
- Write a story featuring the event
- Send the story with pictures to all of your media contacts that did not attend
- Thank all of your media contacts that published a story or pictures
- Update your website
- Update any relevant blogs
- Update your telephone lists
- Update your e-mail lists

Appendix E Forms

Volunteer Information Sheet

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ MOBILE: _____

WORK PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

EMAIL: _____

WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH:

☐ Phone banking ☐ Block walking ☐ Typing☐ General office ☐ Mailing ☐ Answer phones☐ Host Fundraiser ☐ Put up signs☐ Bi-lingual _____ Which language?

Other: _____

Hours available: _____ Days: _____

Hrs/Week: _____

Names of any friends who may also want to volunteer:

_____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

Referred by: _____

Will work from: ☐ Democratic HQ ☐ Alternate HQ Other _____Materials requested: ☐ Yard Sign ☐ Bumper Sticker Other _____

Task Sign-Up Sheet

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need _____ people. Can you help out?

We will be: _____ at: _____ on: _____
(circle one) (place) (daydate)

Phone Banking

Lit Dropping

We need _____ people

Block Walking

CAN YOU HELP OUT?

Stuffing – Labeling – Stamping

Writing Letters to the Editor

SIGN UP BELOW

Name

Phone Number for Reminder Call

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____
- 12) _____
- 13) _____
- 14) _____

Office Sign-Up Sheet

HEADQUARTERS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please list the days and hours you can work next week.

Name

Days / Hours

Phone Number

[illegible]

Appendix F Sample Democratic Club Constitution

It is highly desirable that any document drawn for a Democratic organization adhere to the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party* and Principles therein. The constitution below is only an example.

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be The XXXXXXXXX Democrats; hereafter called the club.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this club shall be the following:

- a. To stimulate in people an active interest in governmental affairs
- b. To increase the efficiency of popular government
- c. To perpetuate the ideals and principals of the Democratic Party
- d. To identify and engage Democrats in a friendly forum
- e. To attract new members to the Democratic Party
- f. To help acquaint voters and potential voters with the issues and the candidates
- g. To promote by our efforts the highest degree of governmental response to public needs

Article III - Policy

Section 1. This club shall not endorse or support the candidacy of any person for any public office prior to nomination by the Democratic Party or in any other manor give its influence as an organization to the cause of any candidate or faction of the party, other than in a General Election campaign.

Section 2. This club shall support actively and by appropriate means the nominees of the Democratic Party in national, state, and local elections; it shall endeavor to maintain permanent contact with voters throughout the area, and shall function continuously in order that it may contribute to the growth and influence of the Democratic Party. (Optional – not part of the *TDP Rules*.)

Article IV - Membership

Section 1. Any person who is a Democrat is eligible for membership.

Section 2. Members may be suspended for cause and in cases of exceptional gravity may, by a three-fourths vote of the membership, be expelled. Any member so expelled shall have the right to appeal to the members in good standing, at a meeting called for such purpose, by written notice, whose action determined by a majority vote thereof, shall be final.

Article V - Officers

Section 1. The officers of the club shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and such others as may be necessary.

Section 2. The duties of the officers shall be those customarily assigned to and performed by like officers in similar organizations and clubs, and such others as may be found necessary.

Section 3. The officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the members present and voting, and shall hold office until the election of their successors.

Article VI - Meetings

Section 1. Meetings shall be held on a regular basis.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by one or more of the elected officers at a time, place, and in a manner to be decided upon by the club in its by-laws.

Article VII - Dues

Section 1. A membership fee may be charged at the discretion of the club.

Section 2. Special assessments may be levied as the membership deems necessary for efficient operations.

Article VIII - Voting

Section 1. All decisions to be made by the general membership of the club shall be by a majority vote except in those instances otherwise provided for.

Section 2. Only persons who are members in good standing shall be eligible to vote.

Article IX - Amendments

Upon petition of not less than five members, amendments to the constitution may be proposed, and within 30 days may be ratified by an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the membership present and voting. A quorum for this purpose shall be one more than one-half of the membership.

Article X - By-Laws

The club may adopt such by-laws when it deems necessary. By-laws shall be adopted when approved by a majority vote of the members in good standing present at a regular meeting, or at a special meeting called by written notice stating the purpose for which the special meeting is called.

Appendix G Sample Scripts and Letters

Sample Walk Script

(This script is a sample only. Candidate names and election dates are not current.)

Good afternoon, my name is _____. I'm with the Democratic Party and would like to ask you a few questions regarding local voting and community issues.

1. Are you registered to vote?

(If NO) Are you eligible to register?

Would you like to register today? (If not, leave registration form and end interview.)

(If YES) When was the last election you voted in?

2. Are you aware of the upcoming state and local elections?

3. Will you be supporting:

Tony Sanchez (D) or Rick Perry (R) for Governor?

Ron Kirk (D) or John Cornyn (R) for U.S. Senate?

John Sharp (D) or David Dewhurst (R) for Lieutenant Governor?

Charlie Stenholm (D) for U.S. Representative?

Jeri Slone (D) or Scott Campbell (R) for State Representative?

Thank you for your time, I just have a few more questions.

4. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican or independent?

5. Are you likely to vote this November?

(If NO) What if you were given a ride to the polls or able to vote by mail?

(If YES) Would you like to get information regarding all candidates in the mail?

6. What radio station do you listen to?

What TV station do you watch?

What newspaper do you read?

Thank you very much for your time. I would like to leave you this information regarding candidates and I would like to remind you that Election Day is **Tuesday, November from 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM.** Do you know your voting location? (If no, leave location.)

Remember, if you cannot vote on Election Day, **early voting is available October - November from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM.**

Thank you again for your time and have a nice day.

Sample Phone Canvassing Scripts

(Sample scripts only. Candidate names are not current.)

Precinct Chair Script (General)

(Always take notes on voter registration roster.)

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm your neighbor over on _____. I'm canvassing our voter precinct. Can you spare a minute?

1. Are you registered to vote?

If YES

When was the last election you voted in?

(If past presidential) Did you vote for President Bush or John Kerry? _____

Would you vote the same way today? **Yes No**

(If not past presidential) Was there a reason you did not vote in the presidential election? [Take notes!]

If NO

Are you eligible to register?

(If YES and they lean our way) Would you like to register? (Provide registration form.)
Are there others in your home not registered.

(If NO, thank them for their time and hang up.)

2. One of the duties I have as the Democratic precinct chair is to keep Democrats in the precinct informed of local Democratic activity. I occasionally need a little help looking up phone numbers, making phone calls, and writing letters. Would you be interested in helping me with any of these activities? [Use VOL # for looking up numbers, VOL P for phoning, and VOL L for letters.]

3. Thank you so much for your time. Do you have any questions I can answer at this time?

Hang up.

Precinct Chair or Campaign Office Script

(Always take notes on voter registration roster.)

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from _____.

Can you spare a minute?

I'm canvassing our precinct to talk to fellow Democrats and maybe ask for a little help.

Would you like Kerry/Edwards bumper stickers for your vehicles and would you be willing to display Kerry/Edwards yard signs this fall? We're delivering the bumper stickers now and we'll deliver yard signs as soon as they're allowed. **"B" "Y"**

Do you think you'll have some time this fall to volunteer at our local campaign headquarters?
"VOL"

Do you think you might have some time to help me look up telephone numbers and make a few calls in our neighborhood to identify voters that will support our candidates? We have easy to read scripts.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sample Democratic Primary Reminder Script

and/or

Sample Precinct Convention Reminder Script

[For use by Precinct Chair or persons assisting the Precinct Chair]

(This is only a sample script. Adjust as necessary.)

Good afternoon, my name is _____.

I'm your neighbor over at _____.

I'm also the Democratic precinct chair for our neighborhood. Do you have a minute?

YES – keep going NO – Thank you. Good bye.

I am calling to remind you that the Democratic Primary election is Tuesday, March 7th.

Our polling location on March 7th is _____ and is open from 7 AM to 7 PM.

You may choose to vote early, and that can be done at any Early Voting polling location in the county from February 21st to March 3rd.

Let me also encourage you to attend our precinct convention at 7:15 PM on Tuesday, March 7th, also at _____. To participate, you must have voted in the Primary, either on Election Day or during early voting. Attending the precinct convention is especially important if you want to attend the county convention as a delegate. It's also a good way to get more involved in the Democratic Party.

If you ever have any questions about the Party or our candidates, please feel free to call me at _____.

Thank you for your time and don't forget to vote in the Democratic Primary and attend our precinct convention.

Sample Welcome to the Neighborhood Letter

Galveston County Voter Precinct 491

February, 2006

Karl A. Silverman
Precinct 491 Chair
129 Bayou Bend Dr.
League City, TX 77573
281-xxx-xxxx

Dear Neighbor,

My name is Karl Silverman. I'm your neighbor at 129 Bayou Bend Dr and I'm also your Democratic Precinct Chair. My wife, Deb, and I have lived here since 1994 and we believe that government works best when everyone participates. Welcome to our neighborhood.

As your neighbor and Precinct Chair I have several duties and responsibilities. It is my privilege to assist you in contacting or getting a message to our candidates, elected officials, and Democratic Party officials. It's also my job to identify Democrats and those that identify with our values, and; to increase Democratic voter turnout.

I understand how busy everyone is, so I chose to write rather than call or visit, although if you desire, I'm happy to do either. I am looking for fellow Democrats, Independents, and others that identify with our beliefs.

I've enclosed a questionnaire postcard that I'm hoping you'll fill out and return. Please indicate your political preference and your level of interest and/or participation. You may also call me at any time at the number above.

I encourage you to vote in the Texas Democratic Primary on Tuesday, March 9th if you haven't voted early. Our polling location on Tuesday, March 9th is Ferguson Elementary School on the corner of South Shore Blvd and South Compass Rose.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Karl

Karl A. Silverman
Your Precinct Chair

P.S.

Just a reminder, our Precinct Convention is also at Ferguson on the 9th at 7:15 PM

Sample Precinct Chair Letter Return Postcard

Back of postcard – laid out 4 to a page, landscape.

Dear Karl,

My/our political preference:

_____Democrat _____Independent _____Republican

I/we want to participate in the following ways:

____Attend events and parties to meet candidates
____Display yard signs
____Help send out literature
____Other_____

____Send postcards or letters to friends
____Help make telephone calls
____Volunteer at our headquarters

____ Please send information on local active Democratic clubs.

____ Please call me at 281-_____ Best time:_____

Additional Comments:

Sincerely yours,

Front of postcard – laid out 4 to a page, landscape.

Precinct Chair's Name
Street Address
City, TX 77zip

Sample Invitation to the Precinct Convention Letter

Precinct 491 Democratic Precinct Convention

It's Your Party!!!!

**You are cordially invited to attend your Democratic Precinct
Convention**

7:15 PM, March 9th at the Ferguson Elementary

The Precinct Convention is grassroots politics at its best. We'll be voting on resolutions brought to or made at the convention and electing delegates to the county/senate district convention. Why attend? Not only is it a good way to get involved, but your selection of delegates, based on presidential preference, chooses how the Texas delegation to the National Convention is made up.

To attend, you must have voted in the Democratic Primary (either during early voting or regular voting day). We get 10 delegates and 10 alternates to the county/senate district convention. The county/senate district convention is Saturday, March 27th at the College of the Mainland. From county/senate district convention, you could be elected as a delegate to our state convention in June, this year in Houston. If you can't attend the precinct convention but still wish to be a delegate or alternate to the county/senate district convention, please call me.

Doors to the school will be locked when polling closes at 7 PM but Precinct convention attendees will be permitted to enter the convention area. I'll be there, hope you will, too!

Karl Silverman

491 Precinct Chair

Refreshments will be served

Sample SDEC Fundraising Letter

FROM THE DESK OF SD XX SDEC
PAT WINNER

3/4/06

Thank you for your past support of the Texas Democratic Party. With your support, and support of others like you, the Democratic Party is moving forward.

We hired four field coordinators by combining donations like yours with money donated by the Democratic National Committee. We have also been able to increase the full-time staff at our Party headquarters in Austin, including the hiring of an executive director to oversee daily operations, and we're in the process of upgrading our technology. Last year, the Party contracted with a file management firm to improve our access to voter information and we have made that information available down to the grassroots level.

To continue moving forward we need your help.

There are three very important methods to show your support for the Texas Democratic Party.

1. Send the Party a **big** check. Fill out and mail in the enclosed form. Okay, they'll take a credit card.
2. Become a sustaining member for as little as \$10 a month. Fill out and mail in the enclosed form. Oh, a check for \$120 or more works well, too.
3. Apply for the Texas Democratic Party VISA card. The Party gets money when you get the card and use it first time and it's cool flashing the card when paying. Call me (321-765-4321) or the Party (512-478-9800) for an application.

Let's capitalize on the blowing winds of change. 2006 is our year. Don't delay, send your check today.

Pat Winner, SDXX SDEC, 1950 Lefty Lane, Big City, TX 76543 (321-765-4321)

Help the Texas Democratic Party Today

I want to help the Texas Democratic Party

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Donation may be placed on credit card.

- ☐ I'm becoming a Sustaining Member

Pay by check (\$120 minimum) \$_____

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- ☐ Send me a credit card application

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*Occupation: _____

Circle One: VISA / MC / DSCVR Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Name on card if different from name listed above _____

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Appendix H Sample Articles / Letters to the Editor

Sample Guest Column

(This column is a sample only. Do not use. Facts are not current.)

A Few Reasons I'm a Democrat

By [your name]

When the Republicans blast “big government,” many voters agree—until they realize most of the major programs, protections, and accomplishments of modern times have been the result of Democratic work and leadership.

Democrats gave us Social Security, the minimum wage law, the 40-hour workweek, workers compensation, the Soil Conservation Service, the Rural Electrification Act, the National Labor Act, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Securities & Exchange Act. Democrats led the way for the GI Bill, school lunch program, NATO, Medicare, Head Start, the Older American Act, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Guaranteed Student Loan Program, the first man on the moon, Medicaid, and the Clean Air Act.

I'm proud that all these accomplishments were initiated by the Democrats—most of them over strenuous opposition from the Republicans.

I'm proud that we Democrats are committed to improving government, not destroying it— and proud that in the 1990s, the current Democratic administration enacted the biggest deficit reduction package in history (without the vote of a single GOP member of the House). It brought the U.S. economy back from \$300 billion annual deficits to where it's generating the biggest surplus in more than 40 years. It reduced the unemployment level to its lowest level since JFK was president, with little or no inflation and reduced the number of federal workers to its lowest level since JFK.

And here in Texas, Texas Democrats have a right to be proud of what our Democratic lawmakers accomplished at the Capitol last year—often in the face of strenuous Republican opposition. Democrats led efforts for the state's first teacher health insurance plan, the state's first prescription drugs program for senior citizens, health insurance for more than 600,000 uninsured children, character education, college scholarships, and the hate crimes bill. Democrats won a pay raise for state employees, clean air standards for the biggest polluters, an increase in the state minimum wage to the federal standard, an increase in compensation for crime victims and officers injured in the line of duty and funding for benefits for the children of peace officers and firefighters slain in the line of duty.

Democrats are proving that government can be fiscally responsible, efficient, and responsive to the needs of all Texans and all Americans. Democrats believe in government that works.

If it wasn't for Democrats, we might still be mired in the Great Depression—and NOBODY would be rich enough to be a Republican!

It's the Democrats' investments in the future and in the American people that have made our country the leader of the free world. And we still have the lowest overall tax burden of all the industrialized nations.

Sample Letter to the Editor

(This letter is a sample only. Do not use. Facts are not current.)

Date

Editor's Name (See the contact information on the newspaper's editorial page)

Title (Editorial Page Editor at major urban newspapers; Editor at smaller papers)

Newspaper Name

Street Address or PO Box

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Editor,

Texas Republicans often use photo ops and spin to try to hide their poor record and lack of leadership on the important issues facing our state. They reply on gimmicks to try to distract from their cozy relationships with the big special interests like Enron that contribute heavily to their campaigns.

Take for example the recent press conference that Governor Rick Perry and Attorney General John Cornyn held to announce a state lawsuit against one of the largest homeowners' insurance companies operating in Texas. Perry and Cornyn tried to give the appearance that they were cracking down on policies that have caused insurance premiums to soar for homeowners in our state.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Perry has taken more than \$1 million from insurance interests and done nothing while homeowners' insurance rates in Texas have skyrocketed to the highest in the nation. Cornyn has done nothing to prevent this disastrous situation. Now with the election just a few months away, these two Republicans expect us to believe they are on our side.

Texans want leaders who will stand up for their rights against the powerful special interests. That is why we should cast our votes for Democrats this fall.

Sincerely,

(Make sure you sign the letter)

Your Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone Number

Appendix I What It Means To Be A Democrat

The Texas Democratic Party is a vehicle to bring together the political aspirations of a large and diverse group of people who share common core political values. Take a moment to reflect on what it means to be a Democrat.

We Democrats are people you see in your community: at work, at place of worship, at the store and at the ballpark. We come from all walks of life, but our shared beliefs and values help shape a strong state and nation where every person has the opportunity to succeed.

What it means to be a Democrat

Democrats stand for Hope, Equal Opportunity, and Fair Play. These are the values Texans share in our personal lives and the values we expect to define our economic and social policies. Texas Democrats are building a better state and a stronger nation where those who work hard and play by the rules can achieve their American dream.

We believe:

- In equal opportunity for all citizens.
- In rewarding, honest, hard work with a living wage in a tax system that is fair.
- In family values that are more than a political slogan.
- In quality education that gives all citizens the opportunity to reach their potential.
- In freedom from government interference in our private lives and personal decisions.
- In the benefits of individual strengths in our diverse population.
- In security in our homes and safety on our streets. Criminals should face swift and certain punishment.
- In separation of Church and State to preserve the freedom to pursue our beliefs.
- In a strong United States—morally, economically and militarily.
- In support of laws that protect our environment, including common-sense reforms that give us cleaner and safer air and water.

To preserve these values and to ensure that our state continues to provide economic opportunity to all Texans, we must be able to conduct effective election campaigns.

Appendix J Qué Significa Ser Demócrata

Los Demócratas son personas a quienes usted ve en la comunidad- en los lugares de trabajo, en la iglesia, in las tiendas y en los estadios. Tenemos diferentes orígenes, pero compartimos los mismos ideales y valores, ya que estos nos ayudan a formar un fuerte gobierno estatal y una fuerte nación, donde cada ciudadano tiene la misma oportunidad de realizar el éxito.

Nosotros Creemos:

- En la igualdad de oportunidad para todos los ciudadanos.
- En premiar el trabajo honesto y bien cumplido con un salario justo y con un sistema de impuestos equitativo.
- En los valores de la familia que son mas que los meros “pronunciamientos” políticos.
- En un sistema educativo de alta calidad que ofrece a cada ciudadano la oportunidad de llegar a su máximo potencial.
- En la libertad contra la interferencia del gobierno en nuestras vidas privadas y en nuestras decisiones personales.
- Que nuestro país sea beneficiario de las contribuciones individuales de nuestros pueblo diverso.
- En la protección para nuestros hogares y la seguridad en nuestras calles.
- Los criminales deben recibir el castigo merecido sin demoras innecesarias.
- En separar los asuntos de la iglesia con los asuntos del estado, para conservar el derecho de gozar libremente de las creencias personales.
- En que nuestro país, Los Estados Unidos de América, se mantenga fuerte - moralmente, económicamente y militarmente.
- En las reformas administrativas sensata, que protegen el medioambiente con agua pura y aire limpio.

